

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Puerto Rico: 100 years  
fighting U.S imperialism

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 62 NO. 5 FEBRUARY 9, 1998

## U.S. hands off Iraq!

### Emergency protests needed against bombing plan

Emergency picket lines and rallies at U.S. federal buildings and other government offices are needed now to protest Washington's calculated drive toward devastating carpet bombing of Iraq.

The number one task for class-conscious workers is to organize fellow unionists, students and other youth, working farmers, GIs, and everyone who detests the U.S. empire's march toward war against the Iraqi people to join protest actions and speak-outs throughout the United States and around the

### EDITORIAL

world.

The truth about Washington's imperialist designs on the Middle East must also be told — clearly and widely. We urge all our readers to join in selling the *Militant*, its sister Spanish-language publication *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books (see ad below) — on the job, at plant gates, union picket lines, on campuses, in the Black communities and other working-class neighborhoods, at military bases, and events where working people congregate.

Election campaigns by socialist workers and weekly Militant Labor Forums can also become tribunes for exposing the lies of the U.S. propaganda machine.

The only power on earth that has ever used the deadliest weapons of mass destruction — nuclear bombs — has no moral or other right to demand that the Iraqi government dismantle any of its weaponry, which pales compared to the arsenal of the U.S. rulers. In fact, with classic imperial arrogance, Kenneth Bacon of the Pentagon is telling reporters that his government will not rule out using nuclear weapons on the Iraqi people. Washington's goal is to topple Iraqi

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Militant/Tony Lane

About 60 people turned out for an emergency picket line in Minneapolis, January 27. For more coverage on protest actions, see page 5.

## Washington starts 'countdown' to massive bombing of Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"The momentum propelling the United States toward bombing Iraq appears inexorable," a news article in the *New York Times* stated January 25. Washington has begun a "countdown" to war against Iraq with initial plans for carpet bombing, to start possibly in mid-February, the big-business daily

reported the next day.

"There'll be one final round of diplomacy, and then an ultimatum, and then we act," an unnamed National Security Council official told reporters after a January 24 meeting of President William Clinton's top foreign policy advisers. Several days later the

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## Confident revolutionary gov't hosts Pope in Cuba

BY ERNIE MAILHOT  
AND MAGGIE McCRAW

MIAMI — "I believe we have given the world a good example: you, by visiting what some people call the last bastion of communism; we, by receiving the religious leader said to have been responsible for the destruction of socialism in Europe. Some forecast apocalyptic events, others dreamed of them," said Cuban president Fidel Castro, opening his speech at the farewell ceremony for Pope John Paul II January 25, following the pontiff's five-day visit to Cuba.

See full text of Castro's  
speech greeting Pope John  
Paul II to Cuba

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"It was cruelly unjust that some associated your pastoral visit with the mean-spirited hope of destroying the noble aims and independence of a small country that has been subjected to blockade and full-scale economic war for nearly 40 years," Castro added.

The U.S. big-business media, with hundreds of reporters on the island, did everything it could to portray the Pope's visit as a blow to the Cuban revolution and its leadership. "It defies credulity that Fidel Castro is going to be able to master this new terrain," stated a typical editorial in the January 22 *Washington Post*. "The pope's visit is bound to hasten the transformation of a country most of whose citizens surely strive to join the larger free world outside Cuba."

Despite itself, however, the press often ended up showing a revolutionary people who in their overwhelming majority acted

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## Public workers strike in Greece against gov't attack on union rights

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Public sector workers struck throughout Greece January 27, crippling the country's transportation system. The work stoppage was in protest to a new government bill that targets the right of public sector unions to collective bargain-

ing. This was the second one-day strike in less than a week. Some 800,000 workers participated in an earlier action January 22, according to union officials. Particularly involved are the unions at the state-owned public transit company, the national airline Olympic Airways, the utility companies, and

the state-owned broadcasting enterprise ERT. The strike also coincided with a march by 2,000 teachers protesting cuts in education.

The attack on union rights is contained in a tax bill promoted by the social demo-

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## 'Defend affirmative action,' say Atlanta youth

BY JAMES HARRIS

ATLANTA — Hundreds of people, most of them young Black college students, demonstrated here January 22 in defense of affirmative action. The march went to the capital building where the Georgia state legislature is in session discussing two bills aimed at ending affirmative action in the state.

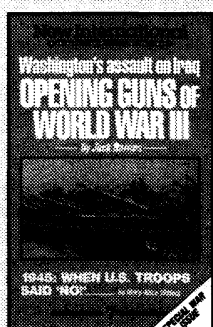
About 600 people joined in the action, which was called by the Stand for Affirmative Action coalition. This student-led coalition has been endorsed by a wide range of groups, including the National Youth Connection, the AFL-CIO, the American Jewish Federation, Asian-Pacific American Coalition, Center for Democratic Renewal, the Southern Christian Leadership Coalition (SCLC), the Socialist Workers Party, the Young Socialists, and a number of college and university student governments. Along with students, the demonstration included trade unionists and other workers.

The demonstrators met at Centennial

Continued on Page 11

### Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq  
Jack Barnes



The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New Internationalist* no. 7. \$12.00  
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Jack Barnes  
See ad on page 8.



#### Celebrating the homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's reinforcement brigade to Cuba

Articles from the *Militant* newspaper on the 30th anniversary of the combat waged in Bolivia by Che and his comrades \$8.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. When ordering by mail, include \$3 for shipping and handling.

Clinton's speech promises war, more social cuts — page 10

### U.S. troops arrest Serb officer

U.S. soldiers in Bosnia made their first arrest of a "war crimes suspect" January 22, seizing Goran Jeliscic, a Serbian commander charged with killing and torturing Croats and Muslims. The GIs nabbed Jeliscic after staking out his home in unmarked vans. He was driven to the U.S. military base in Tuzla and then flown to the so-called War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands. U.S. president William Clinton lauded the seizure.

The imperialist occupation forces are now hunting down "war crimes suspects," probing beyond the NATO "operations mandate," which supposedly permitted arrests only when an alleged "war criminal" is discovered during "normal duties." The Pentagon is looking to expand on this precedent to go after chauvinist Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and others. "We're now beginning to pick them off," boasted NATO's operational commander in Bosnia, British Gen. Hew Pike. Twenty of the 54 Tribunal suspects have been taken captive.

### EU taxes Russian fertilizers

Attempting to stanch price competition from Russian fertilizer companies, government officials from countries in the European Union (EU) agreed to impose "anti-dumping" taxes on imports of ammonium nitrate from Russia. The import duty will be in addition to a 6.8 percent tax already paid. Fertilizers from Russia have captured almost 20 percent of the European market.

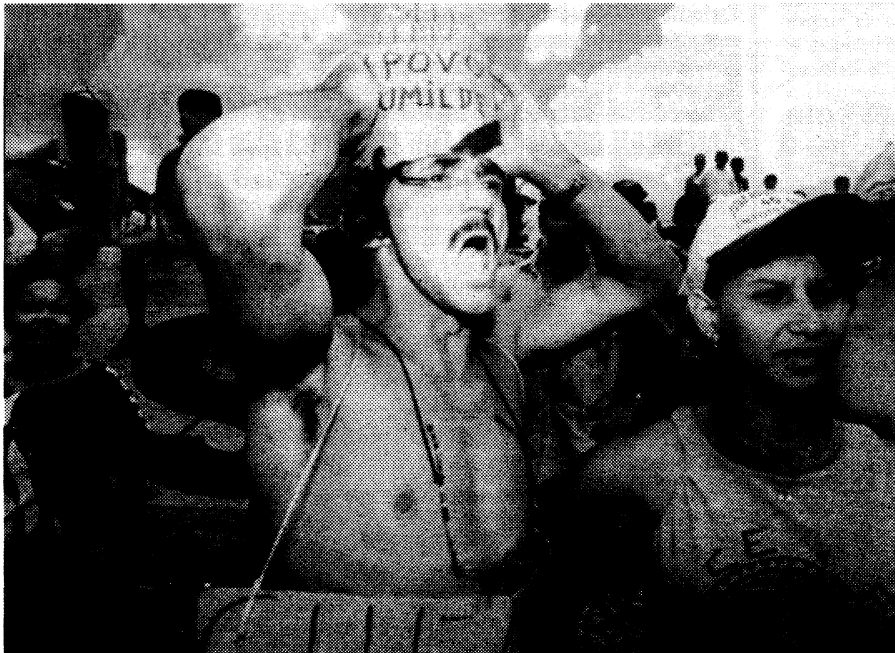
Farmers in France, Spain, and Britain are the main EU consumers of about 6 million tons of ammonium nitrate a year. The chemical is a central ingredient in fertilizer. Last year ICI Fertilizers, the United Kingdom's largest manufacturer, lowered its prices by 12 percent, blaming Russian imports.

### EU to end tallow feud with U.S.

Soap and cosmetic moguls in Europe breathed a sigh of relief January 19 when it was announced that a ban on the use of tallow in their products will be lifted in mid-February. Tallow, a fatty substance made by cooking animal carcasses, is an ingredient in soaps and cosmetics. Washington exports \$120 million in tallow to Europe per year.

Though currently not enforced, the ban

## Peasants in Brazil seize land



**Hundreds of landless rural workers in Brazil seized about 4.5 acres of land on the outskirts of the city of Diadema. On January 22 they organized a protest (shown above) against government threats of sending in cops to break up the land occupation.**

followed the hysteria around the "mad cow disease" in Britain, which ostracized British beef barons from export markets and forced a large-scale destruction of cows there. The carcasses used to make tallow include brains, eyes, and spinal cords — prime suspect areas for the disease.

### 'No layoffs, cutbacks or no coal!' say striking miners in Spain

Mineworkers who extract coal for the state-owned Spanish company Hunosa blocked roads and a railway line on January 19. It was the 14th day of their strike in northern Spain. The workers are protesting the government's plans for cutbacks and layoffs. Madrid maintains that the austerity measures are needed for participation in the European Monetary Union. The 10,000-strong

mineworkers union said it would remain out until negotiations set for January 22 began. The 13 struck mines have lost more than \$13 million since the labor action began.

### Tel Aviv bombs Lebanon

Israeli government warplanes assaulted southern Lebanon January 23, firing five missiles at villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah, supposedly aimed at Hezbollah fighters. It was the second day of Israeli air raids in the region. Hezbollah, an armed organization fighting to rid their country of Zionist occupation forces, organized attacks on Israeli troops stationed inside Lebanese borders January 22 – 23. The Lebanese fighters also staged demonstrations those same days throughout the country, which were part of annual actions denouncing the U.S.-backed capture of Arab east Jerusalem by Tel Aviv in 1967.

### 63 die in Mozambique landslide

Rescue squads found 63 bodies following a January 23 landslide in central Zambezia, Mozambique. An estimated 78 people are missing. Relief agencies in that southeast African country have promised to send blankets, clothes, medicine, and other forms of aid, as well as repairing damaged roads and bridges. With an 83 percent peasant population, the living conditions in Zimbabwe remain largely rural. Only 150,000 of its 18 million people have formal sector jobs. More than two-thirds of the population in Mozambique live in poverty and 67

percent of those above 15 years old are illiterate.

### Inmates end protest in Colombia

On January 12 more than 300 inmates and 460 relatives ended their occupation of the San Isidro jail in the southwestern city of Popayan, Colombia. Government negotiators were forced to meet prisoners' demands for potable water, better medical attention, and an end to overcrowding. The prison was built to house 900 inmates, but was packed with about 1,100 people.

### Newspaper implements 'Megan's Law,' attacks privacy rights

In an assault on privacy rights, *The Home News Tribune* newspaper of East Brunswick, New Jersey, published a January 21 front-page story and two mug shots of a man who was released from prison in 1993 after serving time for alleged child endangerment. The *Asbury Park Press*, a sister paper, also ran the story. A flier with the information was distributed in New Jersey's Union and Middlesex counties and it was posted on the newspapers' internet sites.

The newspapers received the information from a "sex offender release notice" that New Jersey authorities are allowed to distribute under Megan's Law, which allows cops to inform residents when those convicted of sex crimes move in their neighborhood. Teresa Klink, managing editor of *The Home News Tribune*, said she considered the flier to be "public information." Klink claimed that she didn't know if the news articles increased the risk of vigilantism, but "decided to be fair and not publish the man's address."

### U.S. prison population soars

According to U.S. Justice Department figures, as of last June the number of people behind bars in the United States exceeded 1.7 million — more than double the amount locked up since 1985. Some 9.4 percent more people are being held in city or county jails, which generally confine those awaiting trial or serving terms of a year or less. Contributing factors to the increase include longer prison sentences, more mandatory sentencing laws, and less willingness by the courts to grant paroles. Los Angeles has the largest jail population with 21,962 prisoners, and New York comes in a close second with 17,528. On January 23 a federal judge ruled against an inmate's law suit, claiming that double celling — that is stuffing two inmates into a cell made for one — is not a violation of human rights.

Meanwhile, the Federal Prison Industries (FPI), which puts prisoners to work for \$1 an hour in 72 federal prisons around the country, made more than \$600 million in 1997 gross sales income. Ira Kirschbaum, general counsel for FPI, praised the prison labor program for "teaching a work ethic — get up on time, work all day long, do a good job."

— BRIAN TAYLOR

# THE MILITANT

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# London pushes UN intervention in Algeria

## Evidence points to government responsibility for 'terrorist' massacres

BY JEAN-LOUIS SALFATI  
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Meeting January 26, foreign ministers of the European Union (EU) member states called for the Algerian government to allow United Nations "monitors" into the country. This followed a British-led EU "investigative" trip to Algeria, carried out in the name of helping to stop the massacres that have supposedly been carried out by "Islamic terrorists" there.

The civil war in Algeria broke out six years ago after the army staged a military coup and canceled the second round of the January 1992 general elections, which the opposition Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win by a landslide. The FIS was officially dissolved and many of its leaders were killed or imprisoned. As the army turned on protests against the coup, the clashes developed into a civil war. According to the Algerian government, between 60,000 and 65,000 people have been killed in the war. Most other estimates of the death toll are considerably higher. The Algerian government blames the current slaughter on the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), an organization that split from the armed wing of the FIS. But there is increasing evidence that death squads sponsored by the regime itself are responsible for the massacres.

### Evidence of government culpability

The Jan. 11, 1998, *Observer*, one of the main Sunday newspapers in Britain, carried a report about an Algerian policeman seeking asylum in the UK who said he had been ordered to take part in the massacre and torture of civilians. The unidentified man and a colleague were quoted as saying that army special forces, disguised as "Islamic militants" with beards and Muslim dress, slaughtered entire families in the middle of the night. Several other defectors from government forces have also admitted carrying out massacres on government orders.

There is also testimony by survivors of the government's terror campaign. Ahmed, a former imam in an eastern Algerian village mosque, told reporters he had been tortured by the police and security forces. Quoted in the London *Times* January 15 under only his first name, he said those who did the torturing "were trained in special camps. We know these people. Many have been recruited to the Ninja, the killing squads who are carrying out massacres of villagers to spread fear around the country."

While using the massacres as a pretext to clamp down on rights, the government's armed forces have demonstratively not intervened to stop the killing. In August and September of last year, for example, massacres occurred in two small villages 15 miles south of the capital city of Algiers. In Bentalha, 217 villagers were slaughtered in one night. "For four and a half hours," said Ali, a villager who survived the massacre, "they moved through the village at will, killing every one they could," particularly elderly men, women, and children. Most of the victims had their throats cut. The nearest army unit was barely 200 yards outside the settlement, yet soldiers did not arrive until hours after the butchers had gone.

Three weeks before, the village of Sidi Rais had been raided in a similar way, with throats cut, mutilation, beheading, burning, and evisceration. The nearest army barracks is little more than a mile away, yet it took troops three hours to reach the village.

This year news reporters have echoed government briefings that the latest wave of violence coincided with the December 30 start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, thereby implicating the Islamic opposition. But the facts point the finger at the regime. On January 12 a slaughter of 200 villagers was perpetrated in Sidi Hamed, about a 20-minute drive from central Algiers and 10 minutes from the heavily guarded perimeter of the international airport. According to survivors, troops were on the periphery of the village within 15 minutes, but no soldiers moved in until the last of the assailants had left. On December 30 more than 400 people were murdered in a simultaneous attack against several villages in the Relizane region of western Algeria — Khoumba, Ouled Sahnine, and the neighboring hamlets of El Abadel and Ouled Tyeb. The assailants arrived around 6:00 p.m. and

stayed until dawn without being bothered.

In a statement earlier this year, the FIS blamed the violence on "death squads organized by the government" and has backed calls for an investigation into the carnage.

Most of these killings take place in regions where most people voted for the FIS in the 1991-92 elections. No raider has ever been caught or arrested, let alone brought to trial. The government has rejected demands for arms from villagers who feel threatened by attack, instead putting 150,000 so-called militia members under arms. These "militias," portrayed by the government as self-defense units of villagers have in many cases been terror squads deeply involved in massacres. They supplement the "anti-terrorist" section of the army, which has tripled in strength in three years, going from 20,000 to 60,000 men. A "district guard" of 50,000 men has also been created.

### Crackdown on rights

This strengthening of the state security forces is part of a broader crackdown on democratic rights unleashed by the government, including the imposition of strict censorship.

The 1992 elections took place in the midst of a deep economic crisis and after three years of social unrest and mass mobilizations against austerity measures. Inflation was rampant, fueled by a 22 percent devaluation of the dinar in 1991. Food and housing shortages, as well as 25 percent unemployment fueled the unrest.

The FIS campaigned on a platform of denouncing the government's austerity program and widespread corruption in the regime, as well as calling for the establishment of a so-called Islamic Republic. The big-business media in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom have labeled support for the FIS in the 1992 elections as testimony of growing support for "Islamic fundamentalism," claiming this is the continuing source of the crisis in the country. This view has been echoed by many on the left, especially in France.

But the bloody civil war is the product of mounting class tensions in a situation where workers and peasants have no leadership that speaks and acts in their interests. In this context, electoral support for the FIS has been one way that working people have expressed resistance to the government's policies.

Repression and attempts by the government to legitimize itself through presidential elections in 1995 failed to break this resistance. Thousands of people took to the streets last October to protest the government and electoral fraud. The demonstration was cheered by thousands more from balconies overlooking the march route. It was the largest organized protest since 1992.

### Foreign capitalists look for bargains

The conditions faced by the mass of working people are disastrous. In 1994 the government initiated a "structural adjustment plan" under the tutelage of the International Monetary Fund. Under this, payments on the regime's burgeoning foreign debt of \$26 billion were rescheduled. The government initiated a program of privatizations — including of state-owned buildings, public works, transport, and insurance companies — and encouraged more foreign investment. Foreign companies especially scrambled to get a piece of the highly profitable hydrocarbon sector, which had been closed off to them. Algeria has the fifth-largest natural gas reserves in the world, and fourteenth-largest oil fields. Oil and gas exports currently bring \$43 billion a year into the country.

The prospect of making a fast buck and



Thousands in Algeria took to the streets October 30 against electoral fraud in the largest organized protest since 1992. Resistance to government austerity has led to support for groups like the Islamic Salvation Front.

gaining wider influence in the region is at the root of London and Washington's calls for intervention. The British government has equipped the Algerian army to the tune of £63 million (\$37.8 million), while a 1994 U.S. State Department document commented, "Algeria has great long-term potential as a market for U.S. business." Both governments have put mounting pressure on the Algerian regime to allow them to "investigate" the violence.

Some 14,000 people marched in Paris last November echoing demands for foreign intervention. That action, supported by actors Isabelle Adjani, Gerard Depardieu, and Catherine Deneuve, was a torchlit parade called "Day for Algeria." This took place alongside the stepped-up racist, anti-Muslim campaign in France over the last couple years, which has included attempts to bar female students from wearing Islamic head scarves in schools.

Algiers finally agreed to a 24-hour visit from three ministers of the EU governments known as the troika — those occupying the current, previous, and future EU presidencies. Derek Fatchett, a junior foreign minister for the United Kingdom, which currently heads the EU, was accompanied by his counterparts from Luxembourg and Austria on that delegation.

The move by the British government to take the lead on this also reflects the conflicts within the EU, particularly between London and Paris. The French government, the former colonial power in Algeria, supported the 1992 military coup, fearing that an FIS government would not be as subservient to French imperial interests. The Socialist Party government of then-president

Francois Mitterand collaborated with the Algerian military in 1992 to block the FIS's election victory. Paris has been especially generous in securing arms and money for the regime's ongoing war against the FIS. The current government continues to aid the Algerian regime, while presiding over a campaign of harassment and intimidation, known as *Vigipirate*, against the large North African population in France.

French defense minister Alain Richard spoke against international intervention January 13. "France considers there are government authorities in Algeria and they are making efforts to establish a certain form of democracy," he added.

In response to the British-sponsored EU intervention move, the Algerian government has appealed to the strong anti-imperialist sentiment that continues among the mass of Algerian people to oppose foreign interference in Algerian's internal affairs.

### Widespread anti-imperialist sentiment

According to the London *Times* of January 20, most people in Algeria are opposed to any form of foreign intervention. "We don't want anything from Europe. They should go home," *Times* columnist Anthony Lloyd quoted one man in Algiers as saying, adding that this expressed "the over-riding opinion of Algerians."

This popular anti-imperialist sentiment has its roots in the profound social revolution which broke out as an anticolonial struggle in 1954 and triumphed in 1962. Working people in Algeria continue to look to this struggle, as evidenced by the fact that last October's mass antigovernment demonstration was called on the 43rd anniversary of the outbreak of the revolutionary struggle against French colonialism. The triumph over French rule brought a workers and farmers government to power, headed by Ahmed Ben Bella of the National Liberation Front (FLN). The revolutionary regime launched a land reform and literacy program, expropriated much of the imperialist-owned industry, expanded workers control in many factories, solidarized with the young socialist revolution in Cuba, and actively sided with the African National Congress of South Africa. It inspired working people internationally.

In 1965 bourgeois forces within the FLN led by Col. Houari Boumediene took advantage of political retreats by the revolutionary forces to carry out a coup. The new FLN regime consolidated capitalist rule and brutally demobilized struggles by peasants and urban workers to better their conditions. Boumediene held power until his death in 1978, when he was succeeded by Chadli Benjedid.

But the Boumediene and Benjedid governments continued to claim "socialist" credentials and continuity with the anti-imperialist struggle, reflecting the fact that they had not totally broken the capacity of working people to resist. In 1988 a new wave of social mobilizations began as the Benjedid government tried to impose austerity measures in face of a mounting economic crisis. Five days of confrontation between working people and government forces left an estimated 500 dead, 1,000 wounded, and 3,000 jailed.

Algeria was also the scene of massive mobilizations against the U.S.-led war against Iraq in 1991, including demonstrations of up to 400,000 people.

from PATHFINDER

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Robert Chester

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Joseph Hansen

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# Washington plans bombing of Iraq

Continued from front page

Pentagon's chief spokesman, Kenneth Bacon, declared the military attack would be "decisive and devastating."

The meeting of the White House officials included U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen, national security adviser Samuel Berger, CIA director George Tenet, and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations William Richardson. According to the *Times*, they discussed "what may become the biggest bombing campaign" since the 1991 U.S.-led slaughter against Iraq and debated prohibiting the Iraqi government from flying any planes within its borders. The U.S. military has already imposed a "no-fly zone" over northern and southern Iraq.

Three naval combat groups in the Arab-Persian Gulf — two from the United States and one from Britain — now form the largest military deployment in the region since the Gulf War. Over the last few months, the U.S. Navy has deployed more cruise missiles than were launched during the 1991 slaughter, according to the January 24 *Washington Post*. Some 28,800 U.S. troops are currently in the Gulf region, with about 375 war planes stationed there and in Turkey. The British aircraft carrier *Invincible* arrived in the Persian Gulf January 25 bringing six Royal Air Force attack jets, eight other war planes, and 11 helicopters. London has also doubled its troops there to 2,000.

The commander of the U.S. military operation in Persian Gulf, Gen. Anthony Zinni, declared he was prepared to attack the "Republican Guard units that keep [Iraqi president Sadaam Hussein] in power, his own infrastructure, and command and control systems."

## Pretext of arms 'inspectors'

The Clinton administration has escalated its military threats in the name of destroying Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction," under the pretext that Baghdad is supposedly hiding evidence that it has biological and chemical weapons. Without presenting any evidence, Richard Butler, the executive chairman of the UN "weapons inspection commission," claimed January 26 that the Iraqi government has biological weapons loaded onto missiles that could be put on mobile missile launchers and driven away to avoid being hit by bombs. Butler had also claimed that the government was conducting "possible biological testing on human beings" at a prison facility, though other UN officials said his supposed evidence proved nothing.

Richard Spertzel, chief of the UN Special Commission of "biological experts," alleged January 23 that Baghdad was operating a secret biological weapons facility.

"We challenge Spertzel," said Iraqi government official Hussam Mohammad Amin. "We say, 'visit this site you talk about where you claim the factory is, with representa-

tives of the international media, to end any doubt, to show the truth, and uncover the lie.'" He added, "We are not surprised that such cheap lies should be issued by one of the main American officials."

Baghdad had blocked a group of UN weapons "inspectors" from snooping into the government's intelligence headquarters January 13, after accusing the team's head, Scott Ritter, of being a spy. The Iraqi government also complained that 14 out of 16 of the inspection team were U.S. and British officers. While U.S. officials immediately denied that Ritter was a spy, the January 14 *Washington Post* reported that he was an "intelligence officer" with several commendations on his record while he was a captain in the Marine Corps for seven years. He was assigned to headquarters of the U.S. Central Command in the gulf during the 1991 war and has been part of the UN weapons inspections operations since then. On January 21 Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz proposed a freeze until April on discussions with UN "weapons inspectors" on granting them unconditional access to Iraqi territory. Aziz said his government did not want to discuss access for the inspectors until after the country's compliance with disarmament requirement has been evaluated by new teams of UN "technical experts" scheduled to meet in Baghdad February 1. The experts' meetings are reportedly scheduled for the entire month of February. Head weapons "inspector" Butler is supposed to report to the UN Security Council in early April on the progress of Iraq's disarmament program.

## Washington prepared to act alone

It appears unlikely Washington will get the backing from Paris and Moscow necessary to pass a United Nations Security Council resolution providing explicit cover for its assault. The U.S. rulers, however, are determined to steam ahead for a military assault, alone if necessary. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said January 27 he "didn't think we've ruled anything in or out," including using nuclear weapons. The day after Aziz's proposal, *New York Times* columnist William Safire stated, "In the Persian Gulf, preventive war is becoming more necessary every day."

As part of its war preparations, the Clinton administration is planning trips abroad to reinforce its military and political dominance. Secretary of State Albright departed for Europe January 28 for meetings with British, Russian, and French foreign ministers to discuss military action. "I'm not going anywhere to seek support," she declared. "I am going to explain our position." Albright will later head to the Persian Gulf joined by Defense Secretary Cohen to press the governments in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to accept the planned slaughter. U.S. Gen. Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will also travel to

attacks on our unions, living standards, and democratic rights," Allen explained. "We should not be fooled by the patriotic drum-beating of the Democratic and Republican party politicians in Washington. Our only real allies in the fight for jobs and against the capitalist crisis are workers and farmers like ourselves in Iraq and throughout the world."

"The war threats abroad are an extension of the U.S. employers' war against working people at home — attacking union rights, social services, the rights of immigrants, women, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities. Rampant police brutality and a campaign to step up use of the death penalty are their weapons on the homefront," Allen stated.

"My campaign stands with the Iraqi workers and peasants and fighters across the globe in demanding the United States and other intruding power remove every last soldier and 'weapons inspector' from the Persian Gulf and that all economic sanctions be immediately lifted," Allen said.



The British aircraft carrier *Invincible* joined Washington's armada in the Gulf January 25. The total imperialist fleet of three battle groups includes dozens of warships, hundreds of planes, missiles, and tens of thousands of troops.

France during the last week of January.

While several "diplomatic options" are reportedly debated among Clinton's advisers on how to resolve the crisis, "We are certainly at least as far as we were in late November" toward pursuing the military option, a senior White House official was quoted as saying in the January 24 *Washington Post*.

Clinton and his top aides began a public campaign through interviews on the November 16 Sunday morning television news programs to "inform the American people of the dangers of biological warfare." Their aim was "to prepare the country for war," the *New York Times* stated a week later.

Leading up to this decision, the Clinton administration orchestrated a string of provocations with its inspectors, pushing Baghdad to expel U.S. officers. The U.S. media ballyhoo included the charade of Defense Secretary Cohen waving a bag of sugar on the television screen, proclaiming that if it were anthrax, it would kill half the population in Washington, D.C. Washington then amassed an enormous armada in the region in preparation for carpet bombing, after accusing Baghdad of illegally manufacturing biological and chemical weapons.

The Clinton administration suffered a setback a few days after its November 14 decision to launch the assault, when Paris and other imperialist allies refused to support military strikes, as did the governments of China, Russia, and many countries in the Middle East. Only London showed solid support for military action, and the White House was forced to accept a diplomatic solution negotiated by Paris and Moscow. Ever since that setback, the White House has been probing for another pretext to execute what is projected to be the biggest slaughter meted against the Iraqi people since 1991.

## Washington's 1991 assault on Iraq

The Bush administration organized a military blockade of Iraq following Baghdad's invasion and occupation of Kuwait in August 1990. Over the following months, Washington built up a military force of some 450,000 U.S. and 200,000 allied troops in the region. On Jan. 16, 1991, the Pentagon unleashed six weeks of incessant air and sea bombardment on Iraq. U.S., British, French, Canadian, Saudi, and other war planes dropped 88,500 tons of bombs, destroying the country's infrastructure, including factories, bridges, electrical power stations, irrigation facilities, sewage systems, and everything else near them. This was followed by a four-day "ground war" that some U.S. military officers likened to a "turkey shoot." By conservative estimates, 150,000 human beings were slaughtered.

The Bush administration called a halt to the killing short of an invasion of Baghdad, which would have led to substantially higher U.S. casualties. In doing so the U.S. rulers thought they had achieved their aim and would be able to replace the Iraqi regime

with one more subservient to Washington's dictates. Bush recently acknowledged that one reason for not continuing the slaughter was fear that the U.S.-dominated "coalition" would shatter.

As it became clear the outcome of the Gulf War would not lead to a U.S. protectorate in Iraq, Washington continued to pursue its aims through maintaining the draconian embargo against that country. As a result, more than 1 million people have died — over 600,000 of them children. Scientific studies conducted by international researchers also unequivocally confirmed that Washington used banned weapons and ammunition enriched with depleted uranium in its military assault against Iraq, exposing vast tracts of territory to contamination.

Baghdad is allowed to sell a limited amount of oil under the terms of the UN embargo, with the proviso that the revenue go only to pay for food, medicine, and war reparations. French president Jacques Chirac said January 27 that Baghdad should be allowed to double its exports within this framework. French oil and gasoline companies have been negotiating future production deals in Iraq. Likewise, Moscow supports easing the sanctions, as the Russian company Lukoil signed a production-sharing pact with Baghdad last March, which is valued at \$3.8 billion.

## Bipartisan support for military strikes

Clinton has garnered bipartisan support for his war moves, including a string of Republican Party leaders who have lined up behind the president. "We are unified in our opposition to Saddam Hussein developing weapons of mass destruction," House Speaker Newton Gingrich told reporters at a January 26 Republican party leadership meeting.

"If there are sustained and serious air operations, then I would be one of the first to defend [Clinton's] actions," declared Republican Sen. John McCain.

The next day, in response to Clinton's State of the Union address, Senate majority leader Trent Lott said, "Despite any current controversy, this Congress will vigorously support the president in full defense of America's interests throughout the world." He was referring to the reports that Clinton had a sexual relationship with a former White House intern and then urged her to lie about it.

The *New York Times* editors asserted January 25 that Washington's military moves "must be insulated from the pressures now bearing down on Mr. Clinton."

One group of Republican party leaders drafted a letter ostensibly defending Clinton's war moves against charges that he is creating a military crisis to deflect the sex scandal plaguing him. The document tells Clinton "at least some Republicans will support you," said Robert Zoellick, undersecretary of state in the Bush administration and a signatory.

Robert Kagan, a former Reagan admin-  
Continued on Page 10

## Socialist worker announces election campaign in Philadelphia

BY BETH FINNEAS

PHILADELPHIA — In response to escalating war preparations against Iraq, the Socialist Workers Party here decided to immediately announce the candidacy of Connie Allen, a 44-year-old sheet metal assembler at Boeing Helicopters, for Congress in Pennsylvania's 1st Congressional District. A member of the United Auto Workers union, Allen is the running in the special election called to fill the seat vacated by Thomas Foglietta, recently appointed as ambassador to Italy.

"I'm running to give a voice to working-class opposition to the U.S. government's impending military strike against the people of Iraq," Allen said. Allen will be joining with others in a public protest against the U.S. war moves on Friday, January 30 at the Federal Building downtown.

Allen reported that at Boeing where she works, some workers say that a war against Iraq will mean jobs for workers in the United States. "But I say that a war to strengthen our bosses will ultimately lead to deeper



# Protesters: Stop U.S. war threats on Iraq

Opponents of Washington's war drive against the people of Iraq have called protests across the United States and elsewhere. Below are reports received by the *Militant* on a few of these actions.

MINNEAPOLIS — "U.S. Hands Off Iraq!" was the call that brought 60 people out to picket the Federal Building on January 27. Protesters marched and rallied for an hour during the afternoon rush hour. The various organizations in the ad hoc committee sponsoring the action spent the previous week promoting it throughout the Twin Cities.

Demonstration organizer Tom Fiske told the crowd, "We want to make it clear to the U.S. government we have three demands: Stop the economic sanctions! Stop the military threats! Withdraw U.S. military forces from the Middle East!"

Chris Afang, a student at the University of Minnesota, came to the rally with one of her friends. "We shouldn't have any troops there because they are only there to protect the economic interests of big corporations here," she said. "I felt I had to come out to protest."

Arshad Modhum is a nursing assistant at Hennepin County Medical Center. He came to the rally with a co-worker who showed him a leaflet a few days before. "I come from Pakistan," he said, "and I have seen what it is like when there is no medicine and no food. My job called me to work an extra day today, but I told them 'no,' I have to protest." Event organizers ended the demonstration by urging all present to help build the next action, which will also be at the Federal Building on Friday, February 6, at 4:30 p.m.

Michael Pennock

NEW YORK — "What do we want? Inspectors out! When do we want it? Now!" and "Drop the sanctions now!" chanted about 30 people picketing the Federal Building in downtown Manhattan January 22. The action was called by the New York Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party. In addition to socialist workers and YS members, a Palestinian professor and some students joined the protest. The reaction by passersby was polarized. Some, mostly well-dressed business executives who are plentiful in that district, shouted at the picketers, "Bomb Iraq now!"

Others welcomed the action. "I am really glad someone is standing up to Washington," said a New York University student who lived in the area and happened to ride by on his bicycle. He stopped to talk to the protesters for a while. He also said he is interested in socialism and asked to find out about Young Socialists meetings. The socialists have called another picket line at the same place for Friday, January 30, 5:00 p.m.

Argiris Malapanis

TORONTO — Nearly 30 people picketed in front of the U.S. consulate here January 22, chanting "Stop the threats against Iraq!" and "End the sanctions." Some of the signs pointed to Ottawa's support for Washington's war moves as well. The action was called by the Communist League, Black Action Defense Committee, and the Young Socialists. It was covered on the local television news that night.

John Steele

HARTFORD, Connecticut — A dozen protesters gathered at Trinity College here



Militant

Picket in Toronto denounces Canada's complicity with Washington's planned assault.

January 27 where Hillary Clinton appeared to give a speech on child care. They handed out more than 500 leaflets with the headline, "What about the children of Iraq?" and stood with signs reading "End the Sanctions" and "Don't Bomb Iraq" as students and visitors entered the Student Center Building for her talk. Activists in the area are also planning to hold a teach-in on the situation in Iraq at Central Connecticut State

University in mid-February.  
Tim Craine

Emergency picket lines are also planned in Miami for January 29; in Montreal, Philadelphia, and Newark, New Jersey, on January 30; and in Detroit February 2. The *Militant* encourages its readers to send in photos and reports on these and other actions.

## — YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — Iceland YS: No to Iraq war, NATO

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY KÁRI GYLFASSON AND ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — On January 17 a rally was held at city hall here titled "Stop killing our children." It demanded that the Icelandic government cease to cooperate in maintaining the United Nations embargo imposed on Iraq since the 1990-91 U.S.-led war against that country. The protest was called by a charity-oriented organization called Peace 2000. It was supported by the Women's Council of Culture and Peace;

Dagsbrún, one of the main trade unions in Iceland; and the Iceland Federation of Handicapped People. Members of parliament from the Peoples Alliance and Independent slate spoke at the event, as did others.

The Young Socialists in Iceland did not attend the action. "One of the points of the action was to state that the UN embargo is only helping to keep Saddam Hussein in power," explained Sigurdur Haraldsson, a leader of the YS in Iceland. "The logic of it is that a different course is needed to get rid of him. But we are against any imperialist country dictating to a sovereign nation who should and should not be in power."

"We discussed it and decided that it would not attract any young fighters with whom we would want to work," Haraldsson said.

Instead of participating in this pro-imperialist action, the Young Socialists in Iceland have decided to organize a protest

against Washington's war moves against Iraq, and the support given to this course by the Icelandic government. The protest will also demand that the Icelandic government end its membership in NATO and that it close down the U.S. military base here. Young Socialists are currently seeking to work with others to build this demonstration, which will be in front of the U.S. embassy some time in the next week. They will also carry out a special sales effort of the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder books, setting up tables at schools, outside factory plant gates, and in working-class neighborhoods. Last week Young Socialists participated in a sale outside of Myllan, a bread factory here.

The YS is also organizing a meeting at the Pathfinder bookstore January 31, titled "The U.S. War Drive Against Iraq." Young Socialists Ólöf Andra Proppé and Kári Gylfason will be speaking at the event.

## 250 attend regional socialist conference in Seattle

BY ALARIC DIRMEYER AND JOSHUA CARROLL

SEATTLE — Organizing a working-class campaign against U.S. imperialism and its war drive against Iraq became the central theme of the international socialist conference held here January 24-25. The working meeting drew more than 250 socialist workers, Young Socialists, and others from across the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. It was held in continuity with recent conferences held in Birmingham, Alabama, and Toronto.

Two presentations served as the starting point for the discussion at the conference. These were "The Siren Call of Economic Nationalism and Washington's March toward Fascism and War" by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes and "100 Years of Struggle against Yankee Imperialism: The Weight of the Cuban Revolution in a World of Growing Capitalist Disorder" by Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*.

The themes of this discussion were supplemented by classes on the working-class campaign against Washington's 1990-91 war against Iraq; the Black struggle in the United States; the Quebecois fight for independence; the crisis facing working farmers and the fight for a worker-farmer alliance; and the rise of U.S. imperialism and the struggle against it.

The general feeling that the conference was a success politically was bolstered by the presence of a number of young fighters attending their first communist conference and asking to join the Young Socialists.

J.P. Crysdale, 19, was one such youth who

hailed from City College in San Francisco. He had first met the YS in Philadelphia in 1996 through a friend. When he moved to the Bay Area for school this year, he decided to look up the Pathfinder bookstore to see if there were any Young Socialists in the area. After coming to number of *Militant* Labor Forums, he decided to come to the conference. Crysdale is particularly interested in learning more about the current economic crisis in East Asia. He pointed out that the crisis "is a sign of capitalism's failure. We shouldn't mistake this for the collapse of world capitalism though. It won't destroy itself. But it is a sign that world capitalism is unstable." Crysdale also plans on taking the fight against U.S. military buildup to his campus.

James Hicks, a young worker and member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) at Northwest Airlines in Duluth, Minnesota, was at his second socialist conference. He attended the 39th Constitutional Convention of the Socialist Workers Party in Oberlin, Ohio, last summer. He has recently been using Pathfinder titles on his job to explain union politics on a class basis to co-workers. One title he has sold on the job is *The Eastern Airlines Strike*, which he uses to counter the arguments of members of the Airline Mechanics Federation of America (AMFA), an anti-union outfit that was backed by Eastern during the strike. "The strike at Eastern showed the bosses that if they are going to take on the Machinists, they are going to get a fight."

Four students came from Santa Cruz, California. Among them was Americo

Castillo, from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Castillo helps organize meetings for farm workers on campus. "I grew up working in the fields," he explained. "I want to learn what it means to be a socialist." He bought *The Wages System* by Frederick Engels and *In Defense of Socialism* by Fidel Castro. When asked about his plans after the conference, he responded, "Read those books!"

Five youth asked to join the YS at the West Coast Regional Socialist Conference.

Part of the conference was a send-off to two important international events. A team of supporters of Pathfinder Press from Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom will be staffing a booth at

the Havana Book Fair February 1-5. A team of reporters for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* from the United States will travel to Cuba at the same time, reporting on the book fair and other political developments there. Delegations from the Young Socialists in Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States will also be traveling to Cairo, Egypt, in early March for a meeting to assess the World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in Havana last year and the next steps in building an anti-imperialist international youth movement. An appeal for funds to cover the *Militant* reporting teams to these events raised about \$13,000 in contributions and pledges from conference participants.

### HELP FUND 'MILITANT' REPORTING TRIPS TO CUBA, CAIRO



A team of *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* correspondents will be traveling to Cuba in early February to report on the Havana Book Fair and other political developments there. The *Militant* will also send reporters to cover a meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in March to assess the World Festival of Youth and Students that took place in Cuba last year and discuss the next steps in building an anti-imperialist international youth movement. Contributions to help make these trips possible can be sent to The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

# London: Thousands demand inquiry into Bloody Sunday

BY MARCELLA FITZGERALD  
AND CELIA PUGH

LONDON — "Thirty years ago the people we represent were nobodies, the Unionists were confident, assertive, and in command. The generation of republicans that we come from have turned this around. Today we are confident, assertive, and in command, and we're not nobodies any more," Martin McGuinness, a leader of the Irish republican party Sinn Fein, told a packed meeting of 700 here.

The January 25 public meeting was called on one week's notice, taking advantage of the fact that Sinn Fein negotiators were in town for a three-day session of the all-party talks on the future of Ireland.

The day before about 2,000 people joined in a march and rally in London called under the banner, "No more Bloody Sundays, Peace through British Withdrawal." The demonstrators demanded an independent, international, public inquiry into the 1972 killing of 14 civil rights campaigners by British paratroopers in Derry, Northern Ireland. Joe McKinney, the brother of one of those killed, was in the leading contingent and spoke at the rally.

Among those on the march were young Irish workers, students, and activists in the campaigns for troops out of Ireland and for the rights of Irish political prisoners. People lined the march route and some waved from their windows. Several people in cars tooted their support, and one man gave flowers to a marcher in the front contingent, where 14 black flags were carried, one for every fighter killed in Derry.

About 20 supporters of the rightist National Front picketed with Union Jacks from a side street, opposing the march.

Over the previous week, four more Catholics were murdered by Unionist (pro-British) death squads in Northern Ireland, bringing the total to eight such killings in the last seven weeks.

Dodie McGuinness of Sinn Fein told the rally that the Loyalist death squads "intend to continue killing Catholics in order to intimidate nationalist people into lowering their expectations.... The Unionist leaders in the talks must bear responsibility for the vacuum which their refusal to engage in genuine political dialogue has created." She drew warm applause when she said, "The issue at the heart of the conflict is British presence in Ireland."

Labour Party Member of Parliament John MacDonnell and Edel Kelly, who is married to political prisoner Patrick Kelly, also addressed the rally.

"Consecutive British governments have refused to address this issue of murder," McKinney told the crowd, speaking of the Bloody Sunday killings. "It seems this lack of accountability is enjoyed only by the state and its agents.... The present Labour government has told us another anniversary will not pass without government acknowledgment. But we must ask what form will it take?" The relatives of those killed argue that they do not want an apology, but for the truth to be told.

Interviewed on TV the previous week, Col. Derek Wilford, who commanded the paratroopers in Derry, described the actions of his troops as "magnificent" in carrying out their orders and called for the politicians to be asked what those orders were. Edward Heath, who was the British prime minister in 1972, declared in the same program that there was no need for any apology or investigation and that he would have no evidence to give to any new inquiry. Despite press speculation, British prime minister Anthony Blair has made no statement on the massacre as of this writing.

The growing support for a new inquiry was demonstrated by a wreath laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey, which was attended by the Dean of Westminster Canon Michael Middleton, Anthony Benn MP, and a national representative of the Federation of Irish Societies. In addition, interviews with McKinney were broadcast on a number of radio and TV channels throughout the weekend.

Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams opened

the January 25 public meeting with a short talk followed by a two-hour question period with himself and Martin McGuinness. "What we are trying to do is a massive endeavor," Adams declared. "For hundreds of years people of our small island have been denied freedom, justice, and peace. We have had our country divided along political lines, some would say sectarian lines. We have had a British government insisting on sovereignty and jurisdiction — an immoral claim maintained by armed force, prison camps, and the paraphernalia of war. We are trying to reverse that, going with the tide of history to a united, free, and independent Ireland. Throughout the world we have seen that other countries have won their freedom and the British Empire has been reduced to a few pockets. If there is a British Empire anymore then we're it!"

Many questions focused on Sinn Fein involvement in the all-party peace talks and London's proposals to maintain partition. One questioner asked about Blair's assertion that the north of Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom. The British prime minister "says there will not be a United Ireland in his lifetime. He's wrong," replied Adams. "We want fundamental political and constitutional change. We do not intend to remodel, recobble, or reinstitutionalize partition in Ireland," the Sinn Fein leader continued, saying that negotiations are "one area of struggle for us."

Replying to a criticism that Sinn Fein was putting faith in the British and Irish governments, Adams said, "The people you can have faith in are yourselves, your struggles over 30 years. Don't put faith in anyone else."

"We have tremendous confidence in the nationalist communities who have stood up and fought and continue to fight like in Portadown, where they faced up to the army, the Unionists, and the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary police force]," added McGuinness, referring to protests against



Some 40,000 people joined the Bloody Sunday march in Derry Feb. 2, 1997.

rightist marches last year.

"We're not fooling the people back home that if you wake up in May there will be a united Ireland," remarked Adams, referring to the British deadline of May 1998 to complete the negotiations. "But this is part of an irreversible process to a united Ireland. There is no way that the Unionists can get up from the negotiating table strengthened."

Adams announced that Sinn Fein will open a diplomatic mission and an office in Britain for the first time. An Irish participant welcomed this, saying that in the past Irish residents in Britain have been afraid to speak up and have been harassed by the British state.

In response to a question about the current terror campaign of random killings McGuinness said, "The people doing the killing are pathetic bigots. There are others who inspired Billy Wright to be a vicious murderer, who inspire the death squads." Wright was the head of Loyalist Volunteer Force death squad, who was killed at the end of 1997. "We should not rule out that the hand behind this is the British establishment. In South Africa every day it's revealed that the military establishment resisted change."

On January 27 the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) withdrew from the talks after admitting that the Ulster Freedom Fighters, which they represent, were responsible for several of the recent murders of Catholics.

This followed much hand-wringing by representatives of London and Dublin over whether the group should be expelled. British officials made it clear they would like to readmit the UDP to the talks sooner rather than later.

John Hume of the reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party said the issue was a distraction from the main question, which was getting down to detail on the "heads of agreement" document proposed by the British and Irish governments as the framework for the talks. Sinn Fein has rejected this scheme as a Unionist document.

Sinn Fein did not call for the UDP's expulsion from the talks, but Adams pointed to the hypocrisy of London's position. "If the IRA [Irish Republican Army] had conducted these killings, do you think the government would be in a dilemma over Sinn Fein's involvement in these talks?" he asked.

The fact that Ulster Unionist Party chief David Trimble refuses to engage in a serious process of negotiations is the real source of the crisis in the talks, Adams stated. This stance by the leader of the largest Unionist party "sends a potent signal that at its most extreme end leads to the killing of Catholics," he said.

Sinn Fein officials have publicly called on Trimble to meet with Adams.

Celia Pugh is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

## Tel Aviv balks on West Bank withdrawal

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Visits to Washington by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat January 20-23 for separate meetings with U.S. president William Clinton resolved none of the issues around Tel Aviv's withdrawal from West Bank settlements.

According to agreements signed by the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1995, the first of three Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank was to have been carried out in September 1996, followed by two others six and 12 months later. The third withdrawal was to leave Palestinians holding as much as 91 percent of the land in the West Bank. But so far the Israeli government has not carried out even the first pullback. Only 3 percent of the land in West Bank is under

full Palestinian control. Another 24 percent is administratively run by the Palestinian Authority, but under Israeli military control. And the rest of the territory is held completely by Tel Aviv.

Clinton's main proposal was to urge the Palestinian Authority to crack down more on liberation forces there. He also proposed that the Netanyahu regime pull back its forces from about 10 percent of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, which Tel Aviv has occupied since 1967. This is a far cry from the 60 percent demanded by Palestinian officials.

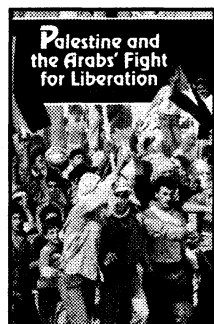
Netanyahu said no pullouts would take place until Arafat organizes a "serious" crackdown on liberation organizations. In fact, the Israeli regime decided to begin building six new 300-room housing units in Jabal Abu Ghneim, a Zionist settlement in

the West Bank, according to Palestinian Cabinet general secretary Ahmed Abdul Rahman.

In the Gaza Strip, a small area of land that is also occupied by Tel Aviv, there were several protests January 23-24 demanding that Israeli settlers leave Gush Katif in southern Gaza. "Relations between Palestinians and Israelis are boiling down to square one — the relationship between the occupied and the occupier," Ziad Abu-Amr told the *New York Times*.

Abu-Amr, a Palestinian government representative from Gaza City, added that if the so-called peace process does not advance, "the result will be resistance."

Meanwhile, millions of Iranians took to the streets across the country on January 23 — Jerusalem Day — in support of the Palestinian struggle.



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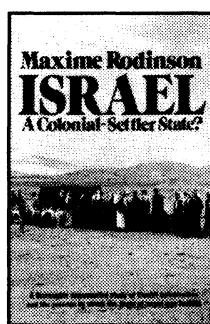


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# Puerto Rico: 100 years fighting against U.S. imperialism

As part of celebrating the 100th anniversary of anti-imperialist struggle, we reprint below an excerpt from *Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean*, by José G. Pérez. It is copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Subheadings and footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY JOSÉ G. PÉREZ

It is necessary to begin from one simple fact, which the capitalist press and politicians don't like to admit: Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States.

Not a colony in some new or stretched sense of the term, but a colony in the classical pattern — a country ruled by another country; a nation that cannot make its own laws, decide its own foreign relations, or control its own economic affairs.

And the "Compact of Permanent Union" is merely the latest in a long series of attempts to cover up that imperialist relationship before the public opinion of the world, a world full of newly independent nations and national liberation movements.

This article will trace the history of that colonial relationship, what it has done to the Puerto Rican people, and their long record of struggle to control their own destiny.

## From one oppressor to another

Puerto Rico is an island with a population of 3 million. Its strategic location in the Caribbean, near transatlantic shipping routes to Central and South America, has played a large part in its history ever since Columbus lost his way en route to India and ran into the Western Hemisphere.

The Puerto Rican people of today originated from three cultures: the indigenous population, the Spanish colonial settlers, and the African slaves brought by the Spanish. For four centuries, until 1898, Puerto Rico was under Spanish occupation. The rulers of the Spanish empire prized it as a military base and as a key link in the chain of ports from Spain to its colonies in the New World. The Spanish ruled through an absolute military-church dictatorship and brutally suppressed uprisings by slaves, Indians, and peasants.

In the early 1800s nationalism began to rise up as a force in Puerto Rico, as it did in many other countries in the Western Hemisphere at that time. A native culture had developed, distinct from that of Spain, containing elements from the three cultures mentioned earlier. For the first time, people began to talk of Puerto Ricans, or *criollos* — the native-born population — as a distinct people. A political debate arose on the question of status vis-a-vis Spain.

It is worth outlining this debate on status, which dominated the island's political life

through the 1800s. Although the colonial masters of Puerto Rico have changed, the same debate has continued uninterrupted, and is being conducted with increasing intensity today.

Three broad currents were involved. The assimilationists, or, as they called themselves, "unconditionalists," were for complete Spanish rule over the country. The second current, the autonomists, reflected the rising nationalist aspirations of the Puerto Rican people, but in a distorted way. They supported a permanent connection with Spain together with some degree of local self-rule. The *independentistas*, the third current, were the supporters of complete separation.

In 1868 Ramón Emeterio Betances led a revolt for independence known as El Grito de Lares, which is commemorated yearly by large proindependence demonstrations on the island. Betances had organized a network of clubs throughout Puerto Rico that planned to carry out a coordinated uprising. The plan was discovered by the Spanish and when the revolt occurred it was crushed.

This movement enjoyed broad support from the Puerto Rican people, especially from the agricultural wage laborers, who made up a large part of the rebel force of 400 men. The demands that were raised by the revolutionaries included the abolition of slavery; freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the press; the right to have arms; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure; and the right to vote on all taxes and to elect representatives.

The uprising in Lares, although unsuccessful, has provided a continuing inspiration to fighters for Puerto Rican liberation to this day. It was one of the factors that helped force the Spanish government to abolish slavery in 1873.

The decline of the Spanish empire in this period and the rise of the United States as an industrial power tended to weaken Spain's hold on its few remaining colonies. As Puerto Rico increased its trade with the United States, Washington began to explore ways to take over the island. The Spanish countered with greater concessions to the *criollos*.

In 1897, Spain granted Puerto Rico far-reaching autonomy. The reason for this concession was the War for Independence in Cuba, which had militarily defeated the Spanish. The Cuban Revolutionary Party, which led the struggle in Cuba, had a Puerto Rican section, and the liberals who demanded autonomy from Spain threatened to join forces with the revolutionaries if greater self-rule were not granted.

However, there was no time for the new arrangement with Spain to be tested, because a few months later the Spanish-American War broke out, and the United States invaded Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.

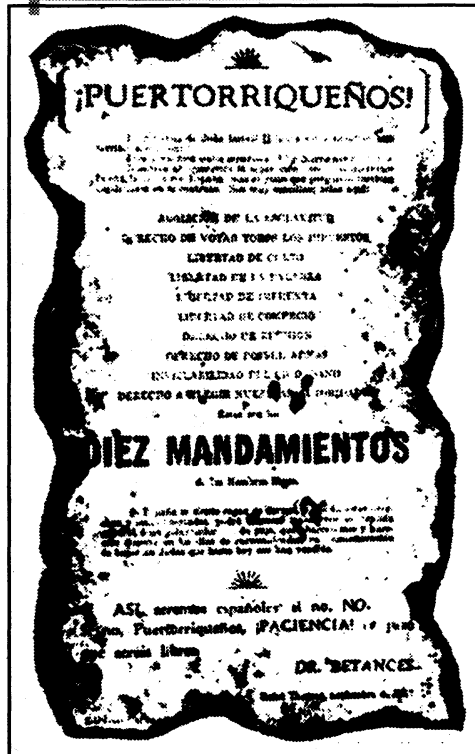
The invasion of Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, was led by General Nelson A. Miles. It was Miles who in 1890 had dispatched the troops that carried out the Wounded Knee massacre of Native Americans in South Dakota. He also had played a major role in smashing the Pullman strike in 1894.<sup>1</sup>

By mistake Miles landed on the opposite corner of the island from the Spanish forces, and Spain's surrender offer was already on its way to Washington, so there was virtually no fighting in Puerto Rico.

The general issued a proclamation "To the Inhabitants of Porto Rico" (it took many years for the North Americans to learn to spell the country's name) which stated that the U.S. forces had come "in the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity ... to bring you protection ... to promote your



Above: Militant/Rebecca Arenson  
Above, Oct. 1, 1997, pro-independence youth in general strike in San Juan, Puerto Rico. For 100 years Puerto Ricans have fought against U.S. imperialism. At left, "10 Commandments" issued in 1868 by Ramón Emeterio Betances, leader of "El Grito de Lares" revolt against Spanish colonialism. The first demand reads: Abolition of slavery.



prosperity, and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government."

A few days earlier, Amos Fiske, an influential business writer, more candidly spelled out the thinking of the U.S. rulers in the editorial pages of the *New York Times*:

"There can be no question about the wisdom of taking possession of the Island of Puerto Rico and keeping it for all time....

"Our need of a foothold in the West Indies for naval purposes has long been recognized....

"The island could be rendered of no small commercial value to us....

"There is no reason why it should not become ... an especially charming winter resort for denizens of the North."

Fiske noted that "we are not pledged to give Puerto Rico independence.... Besides, it would be much better for her to come at once under the beneficent sway of the United States than to engage in doubtful experiments at self-government."

## The impact of U.S. rule

U.S. imperialist domination has shaped two distinct periods in the island's history, both involving tremendous social and economic hardships for the Puerto Rican people. The initial period extended from the arrival of U.S. forces to the Second World War.

The first year of U.S. rule saw great changes in the economy of the island. Previously, the economy had been based on agriculture and there were many small landholders. The most important crop was coffee, which lent itself to production on a small scale since no heavy machinery or large investments were required. About 40 percent of the land was devoted to this crop. Another 32 percent of the land was used in growing foodstuffs for consumption on the island. Some 15 percent was devoted to sugar and only 1 percent to tobacco.

It should be noted that much of the economy, including 93 percent of the agricultural holdings, was in Puerto Rican hands.

The first dislocating effect of the U.S. occupation was that the coffee industry was wiped out. Because of the U.S. tariff structure, coffee could not be profitably exported to Europe as it had been before. Puerto Rican coffee had to be shipped to the United States in North American freighters, and as a result Puerto Rican coffee was priced out of the U.S. market. The hurricane of 1899 and the devaluation of money carried out by the United States in the process of imposing its

own currency on the island meant that the class of small coffee growers was wiped out in one blow rather than in a drawn-out process.

United States monopolies then moved in and gained control over the productive land, inch by inch. The people of the island became dependent on one crop, sugar cane. During the first three decades of U.S. rule, sugar production increased by more than 1,200 percent, most of it controlled by four U.S. corporations. Tobacco also became more important and 80 percent of that crop was controlled by U.S. interests.

Production of these commodities for the U.S. market displaced cultivation of foodstuffs for island consumption, and Puerto Rico became a captive market for U.S. agribusiness.

These shifts in ownership and kind of crop were paralleled by a huge concentration of landed property. By 1940, 80 percent of all farm land was owned by large corporations or landlords with 500 acres or more.

What did this mean for the now-landless peasant, the *agregado* who was working for the sugar companies? From 1899 to 1929 unemployment climbed from 17 percent to 36 percent and, owing to the monoculture of sugar, one-fourth to one-third of the rest of the population was unemployed most of the year.

Prices for food skyrocketed as domestic products were replaced with U.S. imports. By 1930 Puerto Ricans used 94 percent of their income to buy food. The decline of real purchasing power of wages was such that it took Puerto Ricans 104 days of work to buy their food needs for a year, compared with 70 days when the United States first took over.

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who became governor of Puerto Rico in 1929, wrote of his first months on the island: "I have seen mothers carrying babies who were little skeletons, I have watched in a class-room thin, pallid, little boys and girls trying to spur their brains to action when their little bodies were underfed. I have seen them trying to study on one scanty meal a day, a meal of a few beans and some rice. I have looked into the kitchens of houses where a handful of beans and plantains were the fare for the entire family."

Things got worse, much worse, as the depression deepened.

On the governmental and political level, Puerto Rico was under direct military rule for the first two years of the U.S. occupation. In 1900, the U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act, which set up a civilian administration. The governor was to be appointed by the U.S. president. In addition there would be an Executive Council made up of eleven people, six of them North Americans and all chosen by the U.S. president.

<sup>1</sup> Workers at Pullman works near Chicago went out on strike in 1894. They were quickly joined by 125,000 railroad workers who began a boycott of Pullman Cars. State militia and national guards were called in and soldiers opened fire on July 7 killing some 30 persons. President Grover Cleveland then enacted the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, ordering union leaders and members to refrain from interference with operations. The leaders, including Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs, were jailed for contempt.

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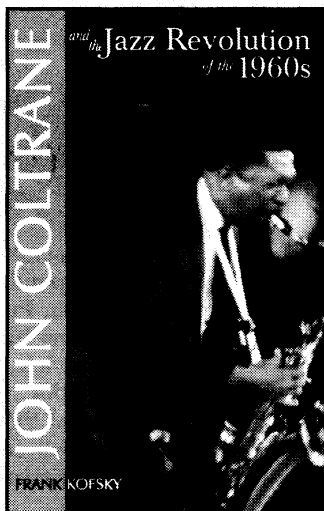
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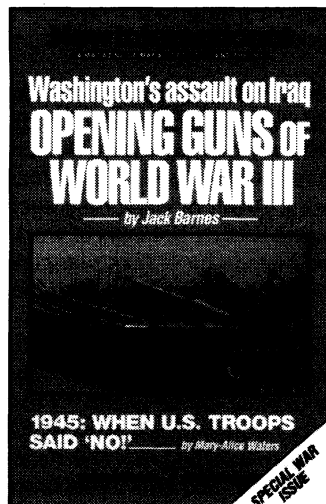
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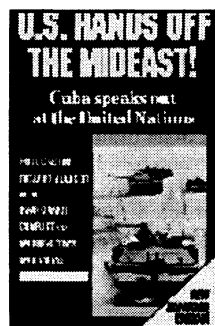
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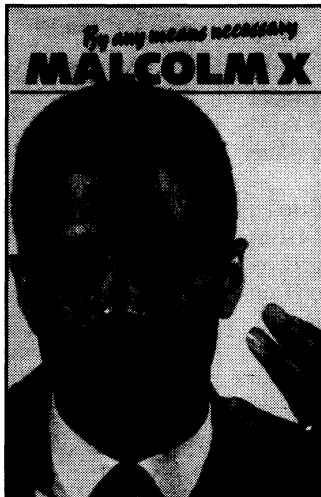
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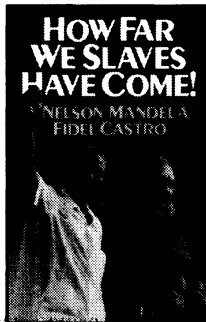
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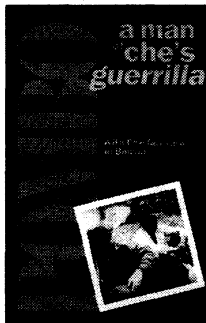
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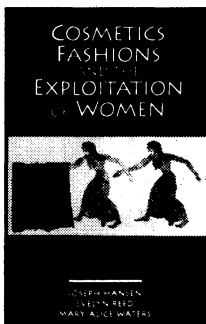


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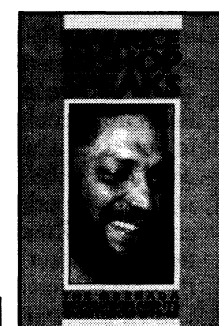


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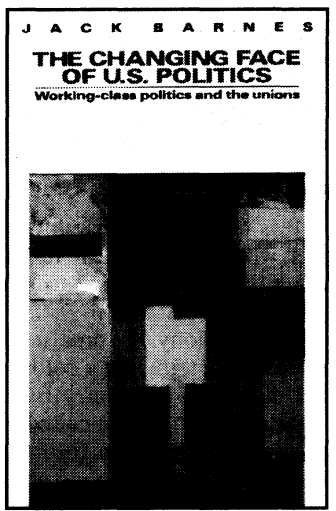
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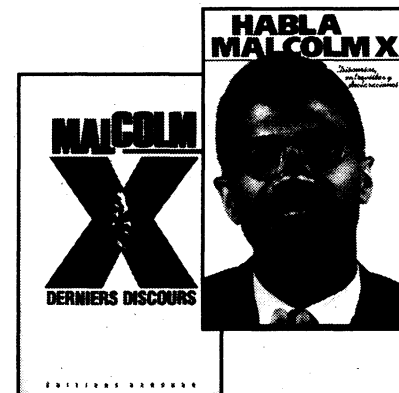
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# Castro confidently welcomes Pope to Cuba

Below we reprint the speech given by Cuban president Fidel Castro at the welcoming ceremony for Pope John Paul II, January 21 at the José Martí International Airport in Havana. The translation is by the *Militant*, from the transcript released by the Cuban Council of State. Footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

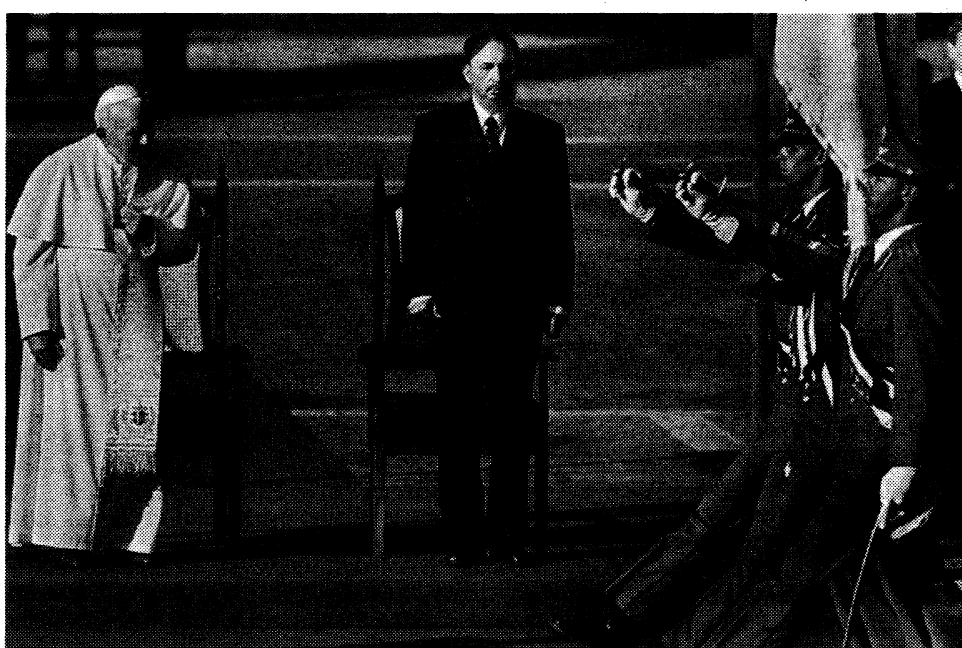
Your Holiness:

The island whose soil you have just kissed is honored by your presence. You will not find here those peaceful and good-natured native inhabitants who populated it when the first Europeans reached this island. The men were almost all exterminated by exploitation and slave labor that they were unable to withstand; the women were converted into objects of pleasure or domestic slaves. There were also those who died under the blade of homicidal swords, or as victims of unknown diseases imported by the conquistadors. Some priests left heartrending testimonies of their protests against such crimes.

Throughout the centuries, more than 1 million Africans, cruelly uprooted from their distant lands, took the place of the indigenous slaves who had been wiped out. They made a considerable contribution to the ethnic composition and origin of the current population of our country, in which the culture, beliefs, and the blood of all those who participated in this dramatic history is mixed.

It is estimated that the conquest and colonization of the entire hemisphere cost the lives of 70 million indigenous people and led to the enslavement of 12 million Africans. Much blood was spilled and many injustices were committed, many of which — after centuries of sacrifice and struggle — still persist under other forms of domination and exploitation.

Cuba achieved its nationhood under extremely difficult conditions. It battled alone with unsurpassable heroism for its independence. For that reason, exactly 100 years ago it suffered a genuine holocaust in concentration camps, where a considerable part of its population perished, primarily women, the elderly, and children. This was a crime committed by the colonialists that, although it has been forgotten in the conscience of humanity, has not ceased being a monstrous crime. You, a son of Poland and a witness



Fidel Castro, 71, stands with Pope John Paul II, 77, during welcoming ceremony at José Martí International Airport as Cuban honor guard marches across tarmac.

of Oswiecim, can comprehend it better than anyone.<sup>1</sup>

Your Holiness, another genocide is being attempted today, so as to bring to its knees through hunger, disease, and total economic asphyxiation a people who refuse to submit to the dictates and sway of the most powerful economic, political, and military power in history, far more powerful than that of Ancient Rome, which for centuries threw to the lions those who refused to renounce their faith. Like those Christians atrociously slandered in order to justify the crimes, we, who are similarly slandered, would prefer death a thousand times before renouncing our convictions. Just like the Church, the revolution too has many martyrs.

Your Holiness, we think like you on many important issues of today's world, and that is a source of great satisfaction to us. On other matters, our opinions differ, but we pay respectful homage to the deep conviction with which you defend your ideas.

In your long pilgrimage throughout the world, you have seen with your own eyes much injustice, inequality, poverty; fields without crops and peasants without food and without land; unemployment, hunger, disease, lives that could have been saved by a few pennies but are lost; illiteracy, child

prostitution, children working from the age of six or begging in order to live; shantytowns where hundreds of millions of people live in inhuman conditions; discrimination for reasons of race or sex, entire ethnic groups ousted from their lands and abandoned to chance; xenophobia, contempt for other peoples, cultures destroyed or being destroyed; underdevelopment, usurious loans, uncollectible and unpayable debts, unequal terms of trade, monstrous and unproductive financial speculation; an environment mercilessly destroyed, at times beyond repair; unscrupulous arms trading for repugnant commercial ends, wars, violence, massacres; generalized corruption, drugs, vices, and an alienating consumerism imposed as an idyllic model on all peoples.

Humanity has grown almost fourfold in this century alone. Billions of people are suffering hunger and a thirst for justice; the list of the peoples' economic and social disasters is interminable. I am aware that many of them are a constant and growing concern of Your Holiness.

I have had personal experiences that have allowed me to appreciate other aspects of your thinking. I was a student at Catholic schools up until I went to university. I was taught then that to be a Protestant, a Jew, a

Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist, an Animist, or a participant in other religious beliefs constituted a horrible sin, worthy of severe and implacable punishment. More than once, in some of those schools for the wealthy and privileged, among whom I found myself, it occurred to me to ask why there were no Black children there. I have never been able to forget the totally unpersuasive responses I received.

Years later, Vatican Council II, convened by Pope John XXIII, took up some of these delicate questions. We are aware of Your Holiness' efforts to practice and preach respect toward believers of other important and influential religions that have spread throughout the world. Respect for believers and nonbelievers is a basic principle that we Cuban revolutionaries have inculcated in our compatriots. Those principles have been defined and are guaranteed by our Constitution and our laws. If difficulties have arisen at any time, the fault has never been with the revolution.

We cherish the hope that, one day, no adolescent in any school in any region of the world will need to ask why there isn't a single Black, Indian, Asian or white child in it.

Your Holiness:

I sincerely admire your courageous statements on what happened with Galileo, the well-known errors of the Inquisition, the bloody episodes of the Crusades, the crimes committed during the conquest of America, and on certain scientific discoveries that nowadays go unquestioned but which, in their time, were the object of so many prejudices and anathemas. That necessitated the immense authority that you have acquired in your Church.

What can we offer you in Cuba, Your Holiness? A people with fewer inequalities, fewer unprotected citizens, fewer children without schools, fewer sick people without hospitals, more teachers and more doctors per inhabitant than any other country in the world visited by Your Holiness; an educated people to whom you can speak with all the liberty you wish, and with the security that this people possesses talent, a high political culture, deep convictions, absolute confidence in its ideas, and all the awareness and respect in the world to listen to you. There is no country better equipped to understand your felicitous idea, such as we understand it and so similar to what we preach, that the equitable distribution of wealth and solidarity among human beings and peoples must be globalized.

Welcome to Cuba.

## 'Lift entire embargo against Cuba now'

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

PITTSBURGH — More than 30 people assembled at the Federal Building here January 24 for an emergency press conference and protest to demand that Washington end its ban on travel to Cuba, stop government harassment of those who travel there, and end the U.S. economic embargo. Called by the Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition, the action was in response to recent letters of interrogation sent out by the Treasury Department to people who have traveled to Cuba and a phone call the FBI made to the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh the previous week, inquiring about the Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition.

It was also timed to take advantage of the substantial press coverage around the Pope's trip to Cuba. Three major television networks covered the protest, as did the city's two major dailies, the *Post Gazette* and the *Tribune Review*.

Ginny Hildebrand of the Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition and MUSIC, an organization of musicians that sends musical instruments to Cuba, explained the demands of the protest. She also introduced Sandy Kelson of Veterans for Peace; Mark Ginzburg, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh; and Miguel Sague, a Cuban singer who lives in Pittsburgh — all of whom gave brief remarks.

Ginzburg, who leaves for Cuba in February with the Pittsburgh-Matanzas Sister City project, condemned the "unlawful and immoral behavior [of the U. S. government], which for the last 38 years has sought to impose economic and political change on Cuba, undermine the freedom to travel, and prevent the exchange of ideas."

Coalition activists utilized this event to publicize an upcoming broadly-sponsored

meeting entitled "Why is Travel to Cuba a U.S. Crime?" that will take place at the University of Pittsburgh February 11.



BY MICHAEL ITALIE

ATLANTA — The second lead story on the ABC television 11:00 news here January 23 was an interview with Félix Wilson, Deputy Chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. "The Pope's visit was a victory for Cuba," he said, pointing out that ABC news itself sent 300 people to cover the Pope's trip to Cuba, compared to just 25 sent to cover his visit to Brazil. "The media and others" are mistaken when they say "the Pope will change Cuba," he added.

Some 60 people turned out January 23 to hear Wilson speak at a meeting on "The Economic Recovery of Cuba in the Face of the Helms-Burton Law," sponsored by the Atlanta Network on Cuba. Several young people attended after receiving flyers at the Martin Luther King Day march earlier in the week.

"The message of Cuba must be heard," Wilson told the meeting at the North Decatur Presbyterian Church. The misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Law, was signed by President William Clinton in 1996. It tightens the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba in an attempt "aimed at overthrowing the Cuban government and killing the Cuban people with hunger," said Wilson. He emphasized that Washington "does not like Cuba being a socialist country. But we are, have been, and will be a socialist country — with free education, health care, and all of the benefits for the people."

Wilson focused on the economic crisis in Cuba, known as the special period, sparked by the end of Soviet aid in 1991, and how the revolutionary government "instituted measures to stabilize the economy and prevent the suffering of the people." He pointed out that through the effort of the Cuban people, the Gross Domestic Product has increased in each of the last few years, by 7.8 percent in 1996 and 2.5 percent in 1997.

Earlier Wilson participated in a three-day symposium on "The Postmodern Caribbean" January 21 – 23 at the University of Georgia in Athens. The gathering was addressed by writers and university professors, in addition to ambassadors to the United States from the Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia, and the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States. Wilson expressed his gratitude for the Pope's call to end the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Commenting on several Congressional proposals to limit the embargo, Wilson concluded that "Cuba appreciates all efforts, but Cuba's position is to lift the entire embargo, not just food and medicine."



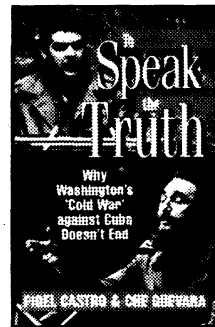
About 100 people demonstrated in Denver, Colorado, January 24 demanding an end to Washington's embargo against Cuba. The action was called by Coloradans for Cuba. It was reported in the *Denver Post* the next day with a photo of a young protester carrying a banner that read, "Freedom Now to Travel to Cuba." The same day, 30 people picketed the Federal Building in Hartford, Connecticut, raising the same demands. The protest, organized by the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba, was covered on all four local television stations.

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# Hundreds defend abortion rights in D.C. protests

BY MAGGIE PUCCI

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Supporters of abortion rights here held a series of events marking the 25th anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion and successfully defended an abortion clinic against antichoice forces.

A noontime speak-out on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court January 20 kicked off the week's activities. The event was organized by the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) and sponsored by some 23 other pro-abortion rights organizations, including the Coalition of Labor Union Women, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and National Black Women's Health Project.

About 150 supporters of abortion rights gathered to hear speakers relate their experiences trying to obtain an abortion before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and reaffirm the need to defend safe, legal abortion.

Tens of thousands of opponents of abortion gathered in DC for the annual "March for Life" on January 22, the actual anniversary of the landmark court decision.

As part of the activities surrounding the "March for Life," abortion opponents had announced they would attempt to shut down a clinic in Washington. In response, the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force (WACDTF) announced clinic defense mobilizations January 22–24, beginning at 5:30 a.m. Training sessions were held the week before to prepare people in physical defense of the clinics. The one and only provocation came on the third day, when about 150 opponents of abortion approached the Circle Women's Clinic in the Dupont Circle area of the city.

"The mobilization of hundreds of pro-choice supporters willing to come out kept the clinic open," said Heather Amsden, President of WACDTF. Amsden said that about 350 supporters of abortion rights were mobilized at several area clinics that day. She also noted that this is the third year in a row that clinics in the D.C. area were kept open and all patients were seen. Police arrested 15 of those attempting to close the clinic.

There was also a counter-demonstration against the "March for Life" called by the group Refuse and Resist.



Cece Williams from Atlanta speaks at the pro-choice rally January 20 in the capital.

NARAL hosted a private luncheon January 22 attended by 1,000 people that heard a keynote address by U.S. vice president Albert Gore.

Touted as a pro-choice representative of the Democratic Clinton administration, Gore said the United States should "move toward the day when every pregnancy is a wanted pregnancy and every newborn baby is eagerly awaited by two loving, united parents." He called for pro- and antichoice forces to "work together on a common goal: reducing the number of abortions."

U.S. president William Clinton has also supported moves to limit access to abortion,

saying he would sign a law banning a type of late-term abortion procedure if it allowed exceptions when a woman's health is in danger.

That evening, the Capital City chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) held an annual candlelight vigil. More than 100 people gathered at the U.S. Supreme Court in a spirited picket line demanding safe, accessible, and affordable abortions, while chanting, "Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate."

Maggie Pucci is a member of the United Auto Workers in Baltimore.

## Clinton speech promises war, more social cuts

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In his January 27 State of the Union address, U.S. president William Clinton outlined plans to continue on the course he's maintained since his election to the U.S. presidency: deeper attacks on the social wage of working people and willingness to use Washington's military might abroad to advance the interests of the U.S. wealthy class. The president presented his speech under the storm cloud of a sex scandal that is threatening his career.

Asserting Washington's role as chief imperialist cop, Clinton declared, "We must also confront the new hazards of chemical and biological weapons and the outlaw states, terrorists, and organized criminals seeking to acquire them." Threatening military action against Iraq, he said, "Saddam Hussein, you cannot defy the will of the world."

Clinton also called for extending the U.S. occupation force in Bosnia indefinitely and for Congressional approval of the expansion the NATO military alliance. "Bosnia's fragile peace still needs the support of American and allied troops when the current NATO mission ends in June," he stated. These proposals highlight the determination of the U.S. rulers to overthrow the workers states in Russia and Eastern Europe and restore the system of wage slavery there.

On other foreign policy questions, Clinton reiterated his request that \$18 billion from the government's \$40 billion Exchange Stabilization Fund be allocated for International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan arrangements. This allows the president to provide direct loans to other governments without Congressional approval. Washington used such "bailout" loans following the collapse of the Mexican peso at the end of 1994 to deepen the penetration of U.S. capi-

tal in Mexico. Since then U.S. capitalists have bought up a larger portion of the banks, railways, and other national patrimony of Mexico, while conditions for working people there have gotten worse.

A similar process is beginning today in Asia. The government of Indonesia, which received a \$40 billion IMF "rescue package" in October, announced a three-month "temporary pause" on interest payments on loans made to Indonesian companies. Most companies had already stopped making payments, as the currency, the rupiah, has dropped in value by nearly 80 percent since last July. The IMF "bailout" loans imposed by Washington are arranged to assure repayment to capitalist investors.

### Attacks on social entitlements

Laying the political ground for deeper inroads against social entitlements, Clinton again spoke of the need to "fix" Social Security before it becomes "technically insolvent." The president called for a "White House conference" on this topic in December. He repeated the proposal to allow U.S. citizens between the ages of 55 and 65 to "buy into the Medicare system." Under this plan laid-off workers age 55 or older would pay \$400 a month for the health benefits. Medicare recipients between the ages of 62

and 64 would pay \$300 a month for coverage, and when they became eligible, they would have to pay \$10–\$20 a month above the usual premium for health services, which is now \$43.80 a month.

Clinton also bragged that 2 million people were kicked off welfare in 1997. "We ended the old welfare system," he declared, referring to the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. That law abolished the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, part of the 1935 Social Security Act, affecting most of the 13 million workers and farmers receiving welfare and the 25 million people receiving food stamps.

He also pressed for a deeper assault on the democratic rights of young people proposing a "juvenile crime bill," putting 100,000 more cops on street; and hiring 1,000 border police. The government has sharply increased the number of executions since Clinton took office in 1993. More than half of the 434 executions since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 occurred during Clinton's term — 244 people.

Meanwhile, Clinton has been embroiled in a crisis that threatens his career. The day before he geared up for his message to the nation, he denied that he had an affair with Monica Lewinsky, who was 21 when she started as a White House intern in 1995. He

also denied charges that he urged Lewinsky to lie about their relationship.

The controversy around Lewinsky exploded into the public when the charges were printed in the January 21 *Washington Post*. That same day Clinton appeared on "PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer" asserting, "there is not an a sexual relationship, an improper sexual relationship, or any other kind of improper relationship." He also said he "did not urge anyone to say anything that was untrue."

Some ruling-class figures are openly discussing impeachment of the president. "What do we do with a President whose character is impeached," asked liberal *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman January 27. Friedman said Clinton is so "personally discredited" that his policies are "difficult to sell or sustain." Ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan denounced Clinton and the "moral standards of the party he heads." Clinton's "moral authority is diminishing," Buchanan asserted. "And it is hard to see how [this deterioration] is even going to be interrupted, short of a war with Iraq."

George Stephanopoulos, a former Clinton adviser turned television commentator, openly speculated about the possibility that the president might be forced to resign.

## U.S. war moves against Iraq

Continued from Page 4

istration official who also signed the letter, proposed sending in ground troops. In an article to be printed in the *Weekly Standard*, Kagan declares that only an invasion force can accomplish Washington's objectives of toppling the Iraqi government, the *Washington Post* reported January 25.

The planned assault on Iraq has had the backing of many liberals for some time now. The December 1 *Newsweek* magazine featured an article titled "Why we should kill Saddam" by George Stephanopoulos, former senior adviser to Clinton. He wrote, "The gulf-war coalition is teetering and we have not eliminated Saddam's capacity to inflict mass destruction. That's why killing him may be the more sensible — and moral course over the long run."

The course the White House is now on is closer to that of "unilateral" action supported by ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan as well. In a syndicated column published November 19 Buchanan wrote, "France, China, and Russia all oppose U.S. military action, and our Arab allies have defected. With the exception of the British, America stands alone in the Gulf.... Multilateralism

has been discredited: a new era of American unilateralism is upon us." He followed up with a column that argued, "If deterrence — the threat of massive retaliation — worked against Stalin and Mao, why would it not work against an Iraq with no navy or air force and a GDP [Gross Domestic Product] that is but 1 percent of our own?"

As Clinton prepares for war, Iraqi citizens have begun posting notices in neighborhoods and on university campuses throughout the country calling on people to volunteer for military exercises.

Meanwhile, the U.S. press is attempting to gain acceptance for the idea of massive civilian casualties when Washington launches its onslaught against the Iraqi people. Charging that Iraqi president Saddam Hussein "has not hesitated to put civilians in harm's way," a January 28 article in the *New York Times* complained that air strikes aimed at biological and chemical weapons sites would be difficult to "pinpoint" in Baghdad, a city of four million people. "People will die," the article stated, since government installations "are scattered around the city near residential and business neighborhoods."

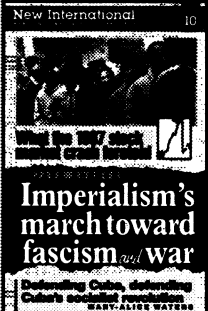
### CORRECTIONS

Two errors appeared the article "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Algerian revolution" by Ahmed Ben Bella that appeared in last week's *Militant*, dated February 2. The caption of the photo on page 8 of Ben Bella's welcome at the airport in Havana in 1962 improperly identified Fidel Castro as the president of Cuba. At the time, Castro was prime minister. The caption should have also identified Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós, who is seated to the right of Ben Bella.

In the article, Ben Bella states that in response to U.S. president John Kennedy, "I retorted that I was a *fellaga*," a term that translates as "outlaw," which the French rulers used to try to slander the Algerian independence fighters, but which in turn the revolutionaries used defiantly to identify themselves. The word was incorrectly changed to *fellah* — peasant — in the translation.

Also, a footnote in the article was misleading. While Sukarno remained the president of Indonesia in name until 1967, he was effectively stripped of power in a 1965 coup.

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# Coca-Cola workers strike three plants; morale is high

BY JOHN HARDING

BOSTON — The 525 members of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Stores Union Local 513 at Coca-Cola Enterprises, the distributor for Coke products in New England, went on strike January 18. Since then they have maintained large, spirited picket lines at the company's three plants in the area. Most strikers are on the lines for the hours they would have been working.

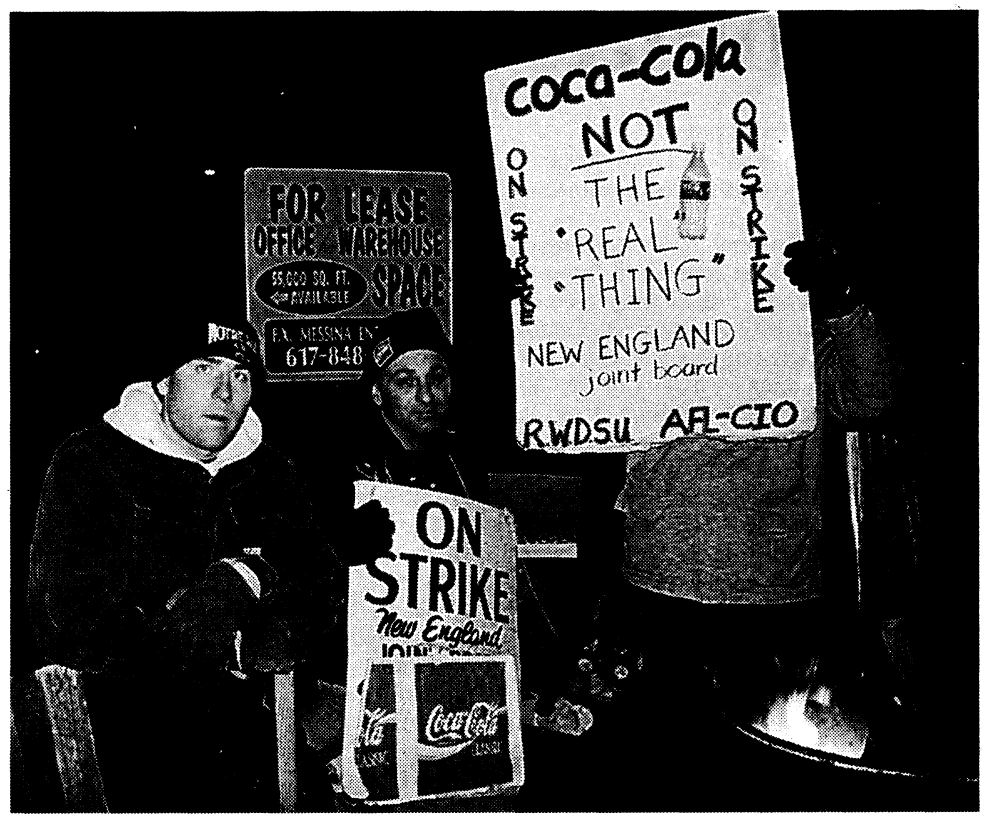
Union officials and the company had come to an agreement on a new contract that included eliminating two paid holidays, replacing them with two personal days. Strikers said that after officials presented the contract proposal to the union meeting January 18, many workers voiced their opposition to the pact. They convinced some union officials to change their support for the proposal. In the vote, the union membership overwhelmingly rejected the company's demands. "We walked right out of there in our sneakers and set up the picket line," one striker said.

Strikers explain that, unlike holidays, personal days are scheduled at company discretion and only 5 percent of the workforce is allowed off work on any one day. Many point to the 10-12 hour working days that the company demands, extended overtime

with little or no notification, and speedup on the job as central issues in their fight. Workers are also demanding improvements in the company pension plan, which currently provides a union member with 20 years on the job only \$700 a month in retirement pay.

Some union officials have seized on the strike issues, such as demands around control of forced overtime, to portray the strike as one centered on supporting "family values." One of the vacation days the company is seeking to eliminate is Veteran's Day. Many workers at the three plants are veterans of U.S. military service. "Be patriotic. Support the Coke strikers," reads a giant electronic billboard maintained by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union right next to the main interstate that runs through the city.

The company's vice president for public affairs Bob Lanz told the *Boston Globe* that "When we heard that employees were not happy about the final offer, we indicated that we would extend the contract and hold talks indefinitely. But the response was a strike and picket lines. The whole thing took us by surprise." He added that the contract was "ironed out with the leadership. We made no preparations for this and so it did sur-



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Strikers picket Coca-Cola plant in Braintree, Massachusetts, January 20. Morale is high as workers at three plants keep picket lines well staffed.

prise us." The company asked for a five-day extension in order to continue distribution operations in the week leading up to the Super Bowl, one of the busier weeks of the year for the soft drink manufacturer.

Despite their professed surprise, Coke management organized to bus in scabs the next day and had kept plants running ever since. The driver of a bus of scabs ran over

a striker and two cops as it careened into the Coke facility in Braintree on the second day of the strike. Lanz demanded workers return to the job before the company would resume negotiations. "Why should we respond to the people who led us down the wrong trail," he said. "We were led to believe this was a good, three-year proposal. Now, everything is being thrown out."

## Minneapolis court drops frame-up of Black youth

BY BILL SCHEER

MINNEAPOLIS — Bending to protests and faced with the probability of losing its case in court, the Hennepin County Attorney's office dropped its frame-up charges against Lawrence Miles Jr. here January 20. Miles, a 16-year-old Black youth, was shot in the back by police last summer, and then charged with two counts of making terrorist threats against a police officer.

The city's capitulation came a day after 250 people marched and rallied in defense of Miles at a broadly sponsored Martin Luther King Day protest. It was the fifth rally and march organized recently to protest police brutality and demand the charges against Miles be dropped.

"By agreeing to this resolution, I am not admitting any wrong doing," said Miles in a statement, referring to the fact that as part of the settlement he will take a gun educa-

tion class. "I firmly believe my civil and human rights were violated when Officer Storlie shot me," added the youth, who is pursuing a lawsuit against the police.

The police story that Miles pointed a pellet gun at them began to unravel when medical authorities confirmed that he was shot in the back. Most recently, Leonard Thompson, a firefighter who arrived at the scene, disputed the cops' version of events. Thompson said he saw the pellet gun near

the back door where Miles said he dropped it, not in the alley where Miles was shot, as police claimed.

Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman, who brought the charges against Miles, said, "The gun program [that Miles will attend] shows there are consequences for running around with a gun at 1:30 in the morning. He paid a huge price. He almost died. He has permanent injuries." Freeman has announced his intention to seek the Democratic Party nomination for Minnesota governor.

Hundreds of people have rallied in defense of Miles at broadly sponsored protest actions since the youth was shot last August. "Freeman underestimated us," said Chris Nisan, a protest leader who chaired the January 19 rally. "He wanted to show how tough he was on crime, that he would make a tough Governor. He didn't think we would respond. He was wrong."

Other speakers included Native American activists Clyde Bellecourt, Vernon Bellecourt, and Roxanne Gould; Black community activist Spike Moss; and representatives from Anti-Racist Action, the Million Woman March, the Progressive Student Organization, and the Young Socialists. Leaders of the NAACP and Urban League were introduced.

Other victims of police abuse also spoke at the rally.

Bill Scheer is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 7263.

## Hundreds defend affirmative action

Continued from front page

Olympic Park and after a brief discussion about whether they should call off the march because of the rain, they enthusiastically decided to march through downtown Atlanta.

Chris Parrish, a 19-year-old psychology major from Morehouse college, typified many when he said, "We just have to march. We are here to make history. It's important for us to be here and say that there is still a lot of racism around and that big businesses can't hide from it or sweep it under the rug. This is my first march but it won't be my last. Not until there is totally no racism."

At the capitol participants stood in the pouring rain for over an hour listening to speakers. The high point was the speech given by the march's main organizer, 20-year-old Markel Hutchins, of the National Youth Connection and a Morehouse college student. Hutchins stated that young people had to be the center of the organizing effort for affirmative action and that the fight could not end with this rally. To emphasize this point at the end of the rally he demonstratively asked all the dignitaries and speakers who were at that point assembled on the stage to leave the stage. He then asked all the students that could crowd onto the stage to do so.

Looking over the stage with the young people crammed together on it. Hutchins said, "This is beautiful. These are the people that are going to make the change. This is where the power is."

On January 15 there was a smaller demonstration of 150 called by the SCLC at the state capital building in support of affirmative action.

Anti-affirmative action forces in Georgia have been emboldened by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision upholding California's Proposition 209, a law passed by referendum in 1996 that bans affirmative action in state hiring and contracts, as well as public education. Two bills are now being dis-

cussed in the Georgia state legislature that use the language of Proposition 209 — House Bill 99 and Senate Bill 243.

"The reason the bills track the language of 209 is that the language has been tested in the courts, and the courts have said this language is constitutional," said Matt Glavin, the head of the Southern Legal Foundation, an anti-affirmative action organization. Opponents of affirmative action have also received legal support and counseling from the American Civil Rights Coalition, a group organized by the forces that pushed the referendum in California.

The U.S. district court in Atlanta has also recently ruled against the affirmative action programs at Grady Memorial Hospital and the Atlanta Public Schools, forcing them to be dismantled. These attacks have sparked resistance and debate on the part of supporters of affirmative.

Some of this discussion took place at a recent Militant Labor Forum, which included a panel made up of Paul Cornish from the Young Socialists, Roxanne Gregory of the SCLC, Vicki McClennan from the National Organization for Women, and Markel Hutchins from the Stand for Affirmative Action Coalition.

The forum turned into a lively discussion of strategy among supporters of affirmative action. Gregory and McClennan said activists should focus on lobbying efforts directed at the legislators gathered at the state capital. This is where they would be spending most of their time. Hutchins and Cornish both stressed the need for mass action. "We have to increase the street heat," said Hutchins. "We have to give this form of action a chance."

Another issue that was discussed at the forum was whether supporters of affirmative action should present their own "alternate language" to seek compromise in the fight for affirmative action, rather than lose the vote on the House and Senate bills. This

so-called compromise would have wording against affirmative action quotas, but guarantee "equal opportunity in public contracts jobs and college admissions."

Some Democratic Party supporters of the compromise effort frame it as establishing a civil rights bill in Georgia, including prominent liberals like state representative Tyrone Brooks, president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials.

Many of the forum participants spoke against this approach and emphasized the need to fight the current bills and any deals that would gut affirmative action in the name of saving it.

James Harris is a member of United Transportation Workers Union Local 511 in Atlanta.

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# Revolutionary gov't hosts Pope in Cuba

Continued from front page

with self-respect and showed confidence in their leadership and the socialist system they have chosen.

This was evident from the first moments of the Pope's arrival at José Martí International Airport, where Fidel Castro greeted the Pope with dignity and respect. Castro then gave a welcoming speech which described the revolutionary history of the Cuban people and their ongoing struggle against U.S. imperialism.

Much of Castro's talk was broadcast throughout Latin America and in many other parts of the world. In Miami every major English- and Spanish-language television station carried his speech live.

A few days before the arrival of the Catholic leader, Castro gave a several-hour speech on Cuban television which showed the Cuban leadership's confidence in the revolutionary will of the Cuban people. In a January 18 *Miami Herald* article Juan Tamayo, one of the Herald's regular anti-Cuban revolution reporters, commented on the speech, in which Castro encouraged large turnouts for the Pope's events.

Tamayo also quoted Castro saying, "If Mr. Clinton wanted to come to Cuba to talk to us about capitalism, about neoliberalism [or] about globalization of democracy, we wouldn't raise the slightest objection." Castro said that Clinton wouldn't dare go to Cuba to deliver such a speech, but if he did, the Cuban people would provide the necessary facilities for him to talk about "the supposed benefits of the medicine prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank."

## Not sure what Pope was talking about

After going to Santa Clara where the January 24 *New York Times* said "many seemed more puzzled than moved by his [the Pope's] presence," the pontiff traveled to the city of Camagüey. There he criticized the U.S. embargo of Cuba, while also attacking many aspects of Cuban society.

He called for the reopening of Catholic schools, claiming that Cuba's secondary-level boarding schools encourage promiscuous behavior among youth. He also condemned Cubans for having too few marriages and too many abortions. The right to free and legal abortion was one of the many advances in women's rights following the 1959 revolution.

Several Cubans, some of whom expressed enthusiasm for the Pope's visit, were asked by a CNN reporter about the pontiff's words concerning abortion and promiscuity. Most of those interviewed said that they really couldn't understand what the Pope was saying about this.

In the final two days of the Pope's visit he said mass in Santiago de Cuba and in the Plaza of the Revolution in Havana.

The big-business press and media attempted to portray the gathering at the Havana mass as a giant demonstration against the revolution.

A January 27 *Miami Herald* article claimed, "Many [Cuban security] agents wore red bandannas around their necks and white T-shirts with a photo of the Pope and President Fidel Castro, while those who led chants to drown out political protesters wore

black T-shirts, witnesses said.

"Repeated chants of 'Freedom!' nevertheless washed over the hundreds of thousands in the Plaza de la Revolución, the first significant outbreak of discontent with the government since a 1994 riot in central Havana," the article continued.

"It didn't happen!" declared Tony Savino, a freelance photojournalist who covered the Pope's trip, referring to claims of the crowd being awash in antigovernment chants. "I was there from the beginning until after the mass ended and went from one end of the crowd to the other," Savino reiterated.

The Catholic Church hierarchy in the Miami area organized a delegation from this area to be part of the papal ceremonies in Cuba. At first they planned to send a cruise ship carrying more than 1,000 people. This was scratched after protests by ultrarightists, Cuban-American businessmen, and other financial backers of the church. About 400 berths had been sold for the trip at the time of cancellation.

The Catholic church here did send a delegation by charter plane, and some people went as individuals. The support for the right to travel to Cuba for these events was so widespread among Cuban-Americans that the ultrarightists didn't feel they could openly oppose anyone who planned on going.

## Visit sparks discussion in Miami

Several weeks before the Pope was to arrive, many opponents of the Cuban revolution here were in good spirits, predicting that real change would now come. They argued the Pope's impending visit showed how

weak the revolutionary government was. As the visit neared and after the Pope arrived, however, their mood changed.

Discussion about the Pope's trip among working people in Miami has been lively, especially among Cuban-Americans.

"You see, it will be the end soon," said one Cuban-American at a sewing plant in Opa Locka. "Nothing will change," said another. Added another worker, "Of course things will change, see what the Pope did in Poland."

Away from these loud discussions, some workers expressed their admiration for Fidel Castro and how they appreciated his speech at the Pope's arrival. "It is true about when there were no Blacks in the school before," said a Nicaraguan woman. "The Cubans here criticize Fidel a lot, but he is right." Another Nicaraguan man bought a copy of *The Second Declaration of Havana*, the 1962 manifesto of the Cuban revolution, as did a Haitian worker who came to the United States when the U.S.-backed dictator Duvalier was in power.

At the weekly meeting of the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community (ATC), a group opposed to the U.S. embargo of Cuba, the discussion about the Pope's trip was positive and enthusiastic. "I consider that with the Pope and the bishops' visit it is really clear to the world that the revolutionary government together with its people have always respected the church and all other religious beliefs," said Eladio Hernández.

Clara Alonso explained "It has united the people of Cuba even more, the visit has been a union with respect and equality," The ATC

activist continued, "I believe it will open up a crack in the situation, with the difficult problem of medicine and food, and that it will give a little opening in reference to the blockade."

At the United Airlines food service facility interest was keen in the Cuba events, as workers reported daily on scenes from television or listened to radios at work. The morning after Castro's welcoming speech, the first question asked by one young Cuban-American was, "Why do you think Fidel mentioned not having any Blacks at his Jesuit high school?" leading to a discussion on the question of fighting racism.

One thing that many people commented on was how well Fidel Castro, 71, looked, especially next to the Pope, who at 77 is near Castro's age but was very feeble. Every few months the press and other opponents of the Cuban revolution here report that Castro is seriously ill or has died.

The right-wing Democracy Movement had planned a 13-boat flotilla to sail to the edge of Cuban waters during the Pope's visit. However only one boat departed, and it ended the trip four miles off Florida's coast. This is only the latest of several disasters for such flotillas. The *Miami Herald* reported that some in the Cuban community are calling them a "circus."

*Ernie Mailhot is a member of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1126. Maggie McCraw is a member of IAM Local 368. Rollande Girard, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, and Janet Post, a member of IAM Local 368, contributed to this article.*

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**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

## CALENDAR

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Protest U.S. War Moves Against Iraq!** Picket the U.S. Federal Building. Mon. Feb. 2, 4:30 p.m. *Michigan Ave. & Cass.*

### NORTH CAROLINA

#### Tillery

**Second National Black Land Loss Summit.** February 19-22. For more information, contact Gary R. Grant or Tim Burke at (919) 826-3017, Fax: (919) 826-3244 or E-mail tillery@aol.com On Website: <http://members.aol.com/tillery>

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Pittsburgh

**Why is Travel To Cuba a U.S. Crime?** Speakers: Jules Lobel, Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh Law School; Jim Ferlo, Pittsburgh city councilman; Arleen G. Kelly, L.S.W., board member, Pittsburgh Sister City Associated; Dan Kovalik, labor activist. Wed., Feb. 11, 7 p.m. University of Pittsburgh, Forbes Quad, Room 1P56. For more information, call Emily (412) 441-3360, Ginny (412) 241-6087.



**'Dang, must be somewhere'** — About 30,000 of the 70,000 U.S. nuclear weapons produced since WWII can't be accounted for. But, the feds assure, they've located a



Harry Ring

data base and 15 million pages of documents that may provide the answer. They estimate the search will take two years and \$3 million.

**Why kids love school** — We were never into giving gifts to teach-

ers, but we felt a real sense of kinship with the 13-year-old in Griffin, Georgia, who was suspended for 10 days for giving a teacher a bottle of French wine for Xmas. The bottle was wrapped and unopened, but she turned him in for violating the school's "zero tolerance" policy.

**Sounds rational, no?** — According to Associated Press, a federal prison psychiatrist found "unabomber" suspect Theodore Kaczynski a paranoid schizophrenic, but competent to stand trial.

**A pious pair** — Britain's Labour prime minister, Anthony Blair, declared that his deep-cutting welfare "reform" scheme won't harm those who are "genuinely disabled or in

need." His stand was lauded by George Carey, Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury. Carey assured that the PM was a "Christian man."

**Your neighborly bill collector** — Fall behind on your water bill in the small town of Erving, Massachusetts, and you face the prospect of a bright red X on the curb outside your home. Time was when a town official would phone delinquents. But, as one explained, the threat of a scarlet X is the "more professional way to do things."

**Health vs. wealth** — "In the current movie, 'As Good As It Gets,' actress Helen Hunt launches into a tirade against the 'greedy' HMO she accuses of withholding medical care

from her asthmatic son. Moviegoers across the country are erupting in cheers and applause at the scene." — *Los Angeles Times*.

**Pot sues kettle** — State Farm, the insurance biggie noted for its capacity to hike rates with every fender bender, is suing Ford. It charges the car maker installed defective ignition switches in 26 million cars and, for years, withheld info. on the potential fire hazards. We assume, of course, that if State Farms wins on this, rates will be reduced accordingly.

**And no lawns to mow** — A Bahamas-based firm is building a humongous ship offering private apartments for those who want to

cruise the world while they work. Fully furnished and large enough to accommodate family, friends and servants. You can snap up an apartment for \$1.17 million plus to \$5.83 million. Maintenance, up to \$20,000 a month.

**'Besides, fat's cheaper'** — The Iowa Pork Producers Ass'n called on companies that can pork and beans to consider leaner recipes. One farmer explained that the "meat" used in pork and beans is mostly fat and doesn't meet today's demand for leaner products. A Campbell Soup chap snorted that they sell 100 million cans of the stuff yearly and aren't about to tamper with the artery-clogging recipe.

## How Radical Reconstruction was defeated

Below we reprint further excerpts from the article "The Fight for a Workers' and Farmers' Government in the United States" by Jack Barnes. The selection describes the Radical Reconstruction period of 1867-77, which followed the Civil War. It explains the revolutionary character of the Black nationality and the class forces that led to the period's bloody defeat. The *Militant* is printing this as part of a series on the conditions that gave rise

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

to U.S. imperialism and the struggle against it. The entire article appears in issue no. 4 of the Marxist magazine *New International*. It is copyright © 1985 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The aspirations of the liberated and proletarianized Blacks, and their allies among southern white working people, were blocked by the growing power of the U.S. capitalist class. The final defeat of Radical Reconstruction required a bloody counter-revolution. The deal between the Democratic and Republican parties to withdraw Union troops from the South in 1877 accelerated a reign of terror by the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camelia, and other racist gangs beholden to the interests of the exploiters.

Farrell Dobbs explained this culminating chapter of the defeat of Radical Reconstruction in the first volume of *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.* Farrell wrote:

By 1877, radical reconstruction had gone down to bloody defeat and not only Afro-Americans but the entire working class had suffered the worst setback in its history. The defeat was engineered by the dominant sectors of the industrial ruling class, who were incapable of carrying through a radical land reform in the old Confederacy and rightly feared the rise of a united working class in which Black and white artisans and industrial workers would come together as a powerful oppositional force, allied with free working farmers.

The rural poor and working class were forcibly divided along color lines. The value of labor power was driven down and class solidarity crippled. Jim Crow, the system of extensive segregation, was legalized. Racism was spread at an accelerated pace throughout the entire United States.

This defeat was suffered not only because the freed slaves, who aspired to get land and to become working farmers, were betrayed by the bourgeoisie and both capitalist political parties. It also occurred because the U.S. working class and its organizations were as yet still too weak and politically inexperienced to provide leadership to the kind of social revolution that could have made possible a massive expropriation and redistribution of land to the freed slaves.

The defeat of Radical Reconstruction set back the possibilities for a fighting alliance of workers and farmers, Black and white, in this country. Attempts at united action by the oppressed and exploited also ran up against the rise of U.S. imperialism during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The robber barons of finance capital encouraged racist notions as part of their ideological justification for imposing U.S. domination on the black-, brown-, and yellow-skinned peoples of Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawaii.

An important effect of these blows was felt in the 1880s and 1890s, as economic and political conditions created a groundswell of protest among farmers across the southern and middle-western United States. This emerging farmers' movement, known as the populist movement, took some significant initial steps to involve Black farmers and organizations such as the Colored Farmers' Alliance. These efforts were ultimately aborted, however, by the forward march of Jim Crow at home and Uncle Sam abroad. Most populist leaders were not able to stand up to these ruling-class pressures, and by the mid-1890s many had joined in the capitalist-orchestrated chorus of racism and jingoism.

The U.S. working-class movement at that time was as yet incapable of developing a political leadership that could present an anticapitalist and anti-imperialist program and strategy to the ranks of labor, to exploited farmers, and to landless Black proletarians. The social and political conditions for such a development were not yet ripe.

In 1877 [Karl] Marx had expressed the expectation that the powerful nationwide strikes sparked by railroad workers in the United States that year might augur a new political situation in which the U.S. working class could provide leadership to the exploited farmers and freed slaves. "This first eruption against the oligarchy of associated capital which has arisen since the Civil War will of course be put down," Marx wrote to [Frederick] Engels, "but it could quite well form the starting point for the establishment of a serious labour party in the United States."

Marx continued, "The policy of the new President [of withdrawing Union troops backing the Reconstruction governments] will turn the Negroes into allies of the workers, and the large expropriations of land (especially fertile land) in favour of railway, mining, etc., companies will convert the peasants of the West, who are already very disenchanted, into allies of the workers."

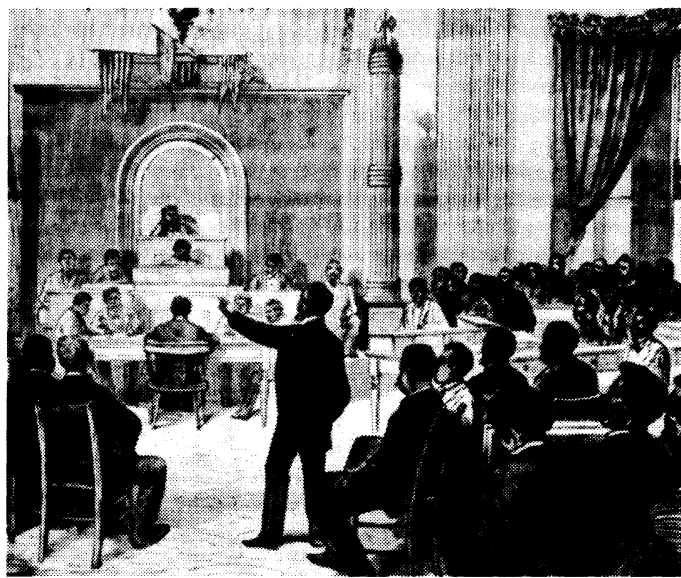
This was not to be. The economic and political reserves of the rising U.S. industrial bourgeoisie were far from exhausted; over the next half century the United States would become the world's mightiest imperialist power. Moreover, the defeat of Radical Reconstruction — what Farrell Dobbs calls the "worst setback" in the history of our class in this country — was a much more devastating blow to Blacks and other U.S. working people than Marx had estimated. The U.S. working class remains deeply divided by the

national oppression of Blacks that was reinstitutionalized on new foundations in the bloody aftermath of 1877. U.S. labor's first giant step toward the formation of major industrial unions did not come for another six decades, and the formation of a labor party, anticipated by Marx 108 years ago, remains an unfulfilled task of our class to this day.

Nonetheless, Marx could not have been more correct about the alliance of social forces that would be central to a successful revolution in the United States.

Nor could he have been more correct about who had become the common class enemy of U.S. workers and farmers, Black and white, with the betrayal of Radical Reconstruction.

Today, the objective conditions *do* exist to build the class alliances that the working class was unable to forge and lead in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The U.S. working class *does* have the power to throw in its weight and give leadership to the battles of farmers and the oppressed Afro-American nationality. Black workers will be in the vanguard of the transformation of the labor movement that will make possible the conquest of state power in the United States by an alliance of the exploited producers. A multinational revolutionary working-class party, attracting



Colored National Convention, April 5-7, 1876, in Tennessee.

both workers and exploited farmers to its ranks, can be built to lead this revolutionary struggle for socialism.

There can be no question in these closing decades of the twentieth century about what the capitalist class has to offer exploited working people in this country and worldwide. It offers war, destruction, economic misery, social inequality, the erosion and eventual crushing of democratic freedoms. That is how capitalism works. It cannot be reformed. The Socialist Workers Party offers an alternative future to the exploited producers. We offer them a party whose purpose is to educate and organize the working class to establish a workers' and farmers' government that will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS  
**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 9, 1973

JAN. 30—The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Jan. 22 that the abortion laws in 46 states and the district of Columbia are unconstitutional. The legislatures in those states must now pass new laws that conform to the Supreme Court ruling.

This means that no state can deny women the right to abortion during the first 12 weeks, states cannot impose restrictions on where or how abortions are performed, such as requiring that they be performed in a hospital instead of in a clinic or doctor's office. States may outlaw abortion during the last ten weeks of pregnancy, but they must still allow abortion "to preserve the life or health of the mother."

Following the court ruling, a bill to repeal all restrictions on abortions was introduced into the New York State legislature and signed by 30 legislators. The Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) supports the repeal measure.

WONAAC National Coordinator Susan LaMont told *The Militant* that "WONAAC views the Supreme Court decision as a major victory for abortion rights. At the same time, we feel there should be no restrictions on a woman's right to choose, and we will be supporting repeal bills wherever they are introduced into state legislatures."

**THE MILITANT**  
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

February 9, 1948

The assassination of Gandhi was political news of the first importance, for Gandhi had become an international figure. His death has provided the capitalist press with an opportunity to wallow in hypocritical and sentimental outpourings. Gandhi was above all a political leader and it is this that explains his extraordinary career.

The least important thing about him was his theory of non-violence, his saintliness, his love of his fellow-man. His political personality and methods fitted like a glove the economic and political needs of the Indian landlords and capitalists. These two ruling classes were caught in a dilemma. To ensure their exploitation of the peasants and workers, the Indian landlords and capitalists depended upon the British government. Yet to free themselves from the clutches of British exploitation, which was ruining India, they had no force except the same millions of downtrodden and oppressed.

Gandhi never alienated the Indian capitalists and landlords. He might talk against industrialization, but every boycott he declared against British goods meant increased opportunities for Indian manufacturers. Gandhi, no doubt, sincerely hated industrialism, but he collaborated with it. Here spirituality capitulated to political expediency.

**The Fight for a Workers' and Farmers' Government in the United States**

**Jack Barnes**

The shared exploitation of workers and working farmers by banking, industrial, and commercial capital lays the basis for their alliance in a revolutionary fight for a government of the producers.

**\$9.00**

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

**New International**

**THE CRISIS FACING WORKING FARMERS**

**THE FIGHT FOR A WORKERS' AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT IN THE U.S.**

Land reform and farm cooperatives in Cuba

# U.S. hands off Iraq!

Continued from front page

president Saddam Hussein and put in power a client regime subservient to the interests of the 60 families that rule the United States. The U.S. rulers are unleashing an imperialist war drive. It's a war drive for oil — to guarantee that the profits derived from the organization and control of petroleum remain in the hands of Big Oil, of the monopolies and the imperialist governments that defend their interests. It's a war drive waged by U.S. finance capital over economic domination and control in a region where the relationship of forces shifted against U.S. imperialism with the overthrow of the shah of Iran in 1979. It's also a war drive waged against many of Washington's imperialist allies, like Tokyo and Paris, that have their own trade interests in Iraq.

The White House has laid out this course since November. As the *Militant* has explained, the Clinton administration was set back last fall because some of its imperialist rivals and other governments whose interests diverge from Washington's, especially Paris and Moscow, refused to go along with Clinton's plan for a military assault. The Clinton administration is now shaken by another sex scandal that stems from it weakening last fall. Whatever the facts about Clinton's lechery and all-around offensive behavior, he is certainly not unique among U.S. presidents — including hallowed liberal icons like Franklin Roosevelt or John Kennedy — or many congressmen. His greater vulnerability to scandals today is a reflection of the instability of the world imperialist order and the growing lack of confidence in this system and its leading personnel.

The scandal notwithstanding, capitalist politicians of all stripes have closed ranks behind their "commander in chief." From ultrarightists like Patrick Buchanan to conservatives like Senate majority leader Trent Lott and liberals like George Stephanopoulos there is near unanimity for unilateral military action by Clinton's White House. The chorus calls for using "American" power by "Americans" and for "America." And the ultraright, especially,

intends above all to use the war abroad to teach a lesson to militant workers at home who dare become unruly.

This course stems from the historic weakness of U.S. imperialism. After slaughtering 150,000 Iraqi people in 1991, they were unable to overthrow the Iraqi regime or to force the Palestinian people to give up their just struggle for self-determination. These failures have sharpened conflicts with other imperialist powers — vying with Wall Street for markets, raw materials, and cheap labor — and have even led bourgeois Arab regimes that have allied with the U.S. government to take their distance. In its weakness, though, the U.S. imperialist colossus becomes more, not less, dangerous.

Working people cannot stop the war, short of revolution or a major upsurge in the Mideast. It is imperative, however, that class-conscious workers organize protests in the streets to oppose the imperialist war preparations no matter what the turnout may be at the moment. Many will remember in the future the small numbers who stood up week after week demanding that all UN inspectors get out of Iraq, that the embargo be lifted, and that Washington, London, and other imperialist powers keep their hands off Iraq. Many will remember those who rejected calls by liberal reformers and petty-bourgeois radicals for "neutral inspectors" or for charity for the "poor Iraqis." These arguments walk workers right into the nationalist trap of the rulers by joining their demonization of Saddam Hussein to defend democratic and "cultured" imperialism. In doing so, socialist workers will find receptive ears among fellow fighters in explaining that the same class waging war against working people at home — cutting wages, slashing social services, and worsening working conditions — is the class starving the Iraqi people through sanctions and preparing to try to bomb them into submission. Many workers, farmers, and students will be convinced in the process that in order to stop the warmakers once and for all the toilers must fight to take state power out of the hands of the exploiting classes.

Their wars will speed the day.

# Humanity's future, and past

The conduct of Cuban president Fidel Castro and of hundreds of thousands of Cuban people during the Pope's visit to the Caribbean nation provided a joyous glimpse of what it means for the proletariat to be in power with a firm, communist leadership. It showed the strength of the Cuban revolution and the confidence of the working class in itself and its vanguard. From the moment the head of the Catholic Church hit the tarmac of the José Martí International Airport, the contrast was striking. On one side stood a trim and fit Castro, addressing the toilers of the world in his welcoming speech, inviting them to join their Cuban brothers and sisters in building a world on new foundations, free of class exploitation, racism, and war. That was humanity's future. On the other side stood the feeble pontiff, representative of reaction and scientific obscurantism, an advocate of banning abortion and returning women to the oppression and darkness of feudalism. That was humanity's fading past.

Castro's welcoming speech (which readers can find in its entirety on page 9) was a marvelous example of proletarian courtesy, communist conduct, and self-esteem.

In 10 minutes the Cuban president presented quite a popular lesson in historical materialism. To begin with, Castro pointed out to His Holiness that he would not find in Cuba the native people who were exterminated by cross-bearing conquistadors. He pointed to the uncompromising struggle against colonialism by the Cuban people and their determination today, after winning independence through the 1959 revolution, to stand up to the mightiest imperialist power on earth. He tactfully described his experience in the Catholic schools of pre-1959 Cuba, which promoted racism. He praised the pontiff's "courageous

statements on what happened with Galileo, the well-known errors of the Inquisition, the bloody episodes of the Crusades." And he ended by explaining that there is no other country better equipped than Cuba to understand that the equitable distribution of wealth and human solidarity must be spread around the globe.

One of the main points Castro made is that religious freedom, that is respect for believers and nonbelievers alike, has been one of the pillars of the Cuban revolution from its triumph. This stands in stark contrast to the intolerance and violence of the conquistadors the Catholic Church is so well associated with.

Castro presented his remarks with respect, dignity, and imbued with the hospitality of the proletariat in power. Tens of thousands of people who heeded the revolutionary leadership's call to turn out in large numbers to hear the Pope didn't seem interested in the pontiff's lectures on promiscuity and against divorce and abortion. Castro's farewell speech was another confirmation of why Cuba is not and will not be another Poland or Russia. There is a world of difference between the Bolshevism of the Cuban leadership — its confidence in the capacities of workers and peasants to transform society and themselves — and its counterfeit, Stalinism. This is what Washington and other imperialist rulers have a hard time understanding.

The events surrounding Pope's visit to Cuba provide further encouragement to supporters of the Cuban revolution to step up activities in defense of Cuba and in opposition to Washington's economic war. The year 1998, the 100th anniversary of the struggle against Yankee imperialism from Cuba to Puerto Rico and the Philippines, provides additional openings to do so.

# Workers strike in Greece

Continued from front page

cratic government of the Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). An amendment to the bill specifies that the government has the unilateral right to impose new work conditions in money-losing state enterprises, in order to achieve "flexible labor relations." Thus, the rulers hope that with the stroke of a pen they will be able to make union-negotiated contacts null and void.

In promoting this measure, Parliament speaker Apostolos Kalamanis stated that the Olympic Airways unions are "a gangrene that has infested the company." The unions are the principal obstacle to the capitalists' plans to restructure the airline through cutting the workforce and wages, as well as increasing part-time work, in order to achieve a competitive edge.

"There is solidarity among other airline workers," said Natasha Terlexis, a member of the Union of Foreign Airline Employees who works at Athens East Terminal. The

government's stand portraying the strikers as "privileged" workers has also gained some support, however.

Public transit workers in Athens have called for daily seven-hour strikes until January 31, causing huge traffic jams.

The government has justified its push to impose austerity measures and gut union rights on grounds that Athens must get as close as possible to achieving the criteria to join the European Monetary Union. "We are seeking a position as an equal partner in the European Union and the European Monetary Union. The employees of state companies must also realize that what is good for the national interest is also good for them," stated Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis. He said there was no question of withdrawing the legislation.

Following the workers' mobilization, a section of the ruling party have begun to distance themselves from Simitis, causing friction within PASOK.

# The dawn of the imperialist system

In a letter published in the February 2 *Militant*, reader Steve Halpern questioned a statement that appeared in the January 12 issue in an article reporting on a regional socialist conference in Birmingham. "[Mary-Alice] Waters, editor of the magazine *New Internationalist*, said that Washington rose as an imperialist power 100 years ago with the Spanish-American war," the article said. "The question I have is what about the numerous imperialist wars that Washington waged against Native Americans?" Halpern asked. He added, "If the Roman Empire was an imperialist power, it seems that the wars against Native

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Americans were a classic example of imperialism."

In opening his pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin pointed out, "During the last fifteen to twenty years, especially since the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the economic and political literature of the two hemispheres has more and more often adopted the term 'imperialism' to describe the present era."

Those wars, the first imperialist wars in the Marxist sense of the term, marked the dawn of a new stage of the capitalist system — imperialism. The main features of the imperialist system that Lenin outlined aptly describe the epoch we live in today. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital, born of the merging of banking and industrial capital, is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance, as distinguished from the export of commodities; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; and in which the division of the territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed. At the dawn of the 20th century, Lenin explained, "Capitalism had been transformed into imperialism."

For most of this century, Marxists have used the term "imperialist war" to describe a particular kind of event: a war waged by finance capital. It's a war over domination and control of a piece of the semicolonial world; a war against other propertied classes in other countries for the domination of raw materials, markets, and access to the superexploitation of low-wage labor; a war to redivide world power and influence among rival capitalist classes.

In 1898, the U.S. capitalist rulers went to war against their declining rivals in Spain, who had been exhausted by the three-decades-long wars of independence by Cuban patriots against Spanish colonialism. U.S. troops invaded Cuba, after Washington fabricated the blowing up of the U.S. warship *Maine* in the Havana harbor to justify U.S. intervention and block Cuban patriots from freeing their country. U.S. forces also seized Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, which were colonies of Spain as well.

The Roman empire existed long before the advent of the imperialist system Lenin described. The term imperialist is often popularly used to describe wars like those waged by Rome and its legions — aimed at economically draining, politically oppressing, and militarily subjugating another people. But the Roman empire was based on a different social system — slavery, which preceded feudalism — than the domination of finance capital that prevailed on the entire globe about a century ago. In his pamphlet on imperialism, Lenin said, "Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practised imperialism. But 'general' disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, the fundamental difference between socio-economic formations, inevitably turn into the vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: 'Greater Rome and Greater Britain.' Even the capitalist colonial policy of previous stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital."

This is not a debate over semantics. The tasks of the toilers in the United States and other countries were different after 1898 than three decades earlier. During the U.S. Civil War, the last progressive war of the U.S. capitalist class, workers and small farmers joined in an alliance with the northern industrialists and the freed slaves to overthrow the slavocracy in the south. Ever since the advent of imperialism, the task of the working class in each country has been to wrest power from the bourgeoisie in order to rescue humanity from capitalist barbarism.

In *Genocide Against the Indians*, longtime Socialist Workers Party leader George Novak explained that modern capitalism in the United States "arose from the disintegration and ruin of two ancient societies: European feudalism and primitive American communism."

Towards the end of his pamphlet, Novak says, "When the pioneers of bourgeois society confronted their precapitalist foes, they had both the power and the historical mission to conquer. Their plutocratic heirs of the twentieth century have neither. In our time the workers are the pioneers and builders of the new world, the bearers of a higher culture.... The 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' known in America's infancy, which the bourgeoisie blasphemed and buried, will be regenerated and enjoyed in its finest forms through the socialist revolution of working people."

— ARGIRIS MALAPANIS



# Maple Leaf strikers fight attempt to move out machinery

BY SUSAN BERMAN

BURLINGTON, Ontario — "There were promises made by the company that no trucks would be moved out, that there would be nobody going in. Yet they took the boxes out, they took spices out, they took machinery from the slicing room out. The latest we've heard is that they're taking the ham line out." Christian Sanc, a striker with 12 years at Maple Leaf Foods in Burlington, described the latest moves by the company against the strike. "The ham line is already cut into pieces and on the shipping dock ready to go," he said.

The 900 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers here struck November 15, and have been joined by another 900 who struck the company's plant in Edmonton, Alberta, November 17.

Many strikers say they're determined not to let the machinery leave the plant. "Monday and Tuesday they [the strikers] stopped the supervisors from going in," so they couldn't ship out the machinery explained Debbie Bernaski.

Pickets said they had heard the company would be going to court January 23 to get an injunction to limit picketing. That way the company can wait until the picket lines are small and then move the machinery out. According to the *Hamilton Spectator*, Maple Leaf has made arrangements with other companies or in its other plants to temporarily supply some of its customers.

"My impression of Maple Leaf is that they intend to be a player on the world stage in the pork business and they don't think they can get there without what they consider to be competitive wage agreements," said industry analyst Michael Palmer. "They'll do whatever it takes to get those agreements."

To Maple Leaf owners Wallace and Michael McCain, being competitive means cutting wages of the Burlington workers by up to Can\$9 per hour (Can\$1=US\$0.70); cutting benefits coverage; eliminating seniority of the current workforce; and making workers pay for each minute over 20 minutes spent going to the bathroom each week.

At their Hamilton processing facility, where wages are already only Can\$10.90 per hour, the McCains want a "flexible" work-week to eliminate weekend overtime pay, to reduce benefits to 50 percent, and to force workers to give up a day's seniority for each day absent. They have already shut their Edmonton facility in face of a strike, throwing more than 900 workers out of a job.

Maple Leaf Foods, one of Canada's largest food companies, has rapidly become a big player in pork production. Pork processing is a Can\$5.8 billion business in Canada.

In addition to competing for North American markets, the McCain's have their eyes on the expanding Asian market, one of the areas where pork consumption has been increasing. In three years, Canadian exports of fresh and chilled pork to Japan, for example, increased over six times to Can\$38.7 million.

Over the last few years, the McCain family has been buying up competitors. In 1995 they bought Maple Leaf meats. Last fall they bought Burns Foods. For the past few months, Maple Leaf has been fighting to get control of Schneider, a pork processor based in Ontario.

The Schneider family, however, countered by promising Smithfield Foods Inc., the largest pork processor in the United States, controlling shares at a bid of \$25 per share. Maple Leaf upped its bid to \$29 per share to try to secure a deal.

"He says he's got to take over Schneider," Sanc told the *Militant*. "They have enough to pay three times the value of stocks for Schneider's, but maintain they can't give us money because they have to be competitive."

With the economic crisis in Asian markets, Canadian pork processors face increased pressure to undercut their competitors — not just for Asian sales, but for North American sales as well. In particular, they face off against U.S. producers who have succeeded in driving down wages, increasing line-speed, and worsening working conditions.

Attempting to play on nationalist sentiment, the Maple Leaf bosses argue that deep wage cuts are necessary because 13 U.S. pork plants have more than double the capacity of its largest plants.

For Maple Leaf, driving down the living standard of workers, getting rid of outdated facilities like the Edmonton plant, and restructuring production are key to becoming top dog in the long run. "I would imagine their earnings will be slightly lower this year than they might otherwise have been [without the strike] but this isn't the question for Maple Leaf. It's a question of what will happen three to five years down the road," analyst Palmer stated.

"The picket line is solid, but people are upset," explained Sanc. "A lot of people have been working here 20-30 years. We're talking about jobs that are labor intensive, where people are dropping dead with heart attacks on the line because of the speed. It's not just the money issues. People feel like we're treated like animals — it's the seniority, the 20-minute washroom breaks."

"I was a knife person at one time, but I started getting carpal tunnel. I took the meat off the neck bones. Then I got off the knife



Militant/Kolya Hughes

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 617-P in Stoney Creek, Ontario, have been locked out by Maple Leaf Foods for more than three months. Striking UFCW members from the Burlington plant recently spoke at a meeting of Canadian Auto Workers Local 707 at Ford Oakville. The strike has received support from auto workers, steelworkers, and others.

and went to a laborer's job," said striker Debbie Bernaski.

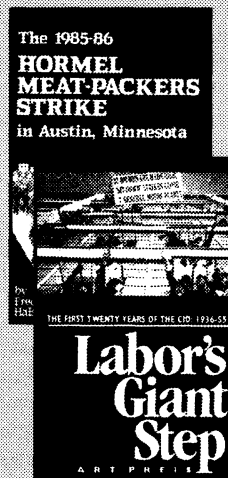
The company restarted negotiations at the two smaller processing plants in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and Hamilton, Ontario. According to strikers in Burlington, the union told the company they could forget about talks with the processing plants if they didn't talk to the union at the Burlington facility. The company has now agreed to negotiations for January 28 in Burlington.

Sanc summed up the importance of the

strike. "We are the first piece of the dominoes. If we fall it's going to be a chain reaction," he explained. Bernaski recounted a discussion with a worker she knows at the Chrysler plant in Brampton. "I told him if they [the employers] go through with this then they're going to go for all the factories, all the unions, all the plants. So we have to stick to our guns."

Susan Berman is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338 in Toronto.

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## LETTERS

### For land mines

It is understandable that one of your correspondents in a recent issue expressed horror at the fact that you do not condemn the use of land mines.

I think we have to start from the premise that problems of war and poverty result from capitalism's need to accumulate capital through the exploitation of workers at home and abroad and its fierce competition for markets, cheap labor, and raw materials. We also have to accept the undeniable fact that land mines are defensive weapons and can be manufactured by poor countries at low cost.

The American technological colossus was able to waste Vietnam from the air with antipersonnel bombs that destroyed cities at the flick of a wrist. However, on the ground, it was halted again and again by homemade mines. Could the Vietnamese have stopped U.S. imperialism in S.E. Asia without this defense?

Cuba has saved the lives of tens of thousands of children at home and in Third World countries with

its socialized medical care. After the [Cuban] revolution the unused land held by speculators and that held by the American-owned Fruit Co., with its extreme exploitation of landless peasants, was distributed to the latter. Think of how many millions of lives would be saved if these measures could be instituted in every Third World country without fear of being crushed by one or another of the imperialist nations!

In the previously secret Kennedy tapes, the CIA tells him that the body count would be enormous if the U.S. attacked Cuba. You can be sure that the Cubans would have used rifles, grenades, AND land mines to defend themselves and will do so in the future if necessary.

Bea Bryant  
Ontario, Canada

### A clarification

I am gratified that the *Militant* properly laid the blame for the incident which stranded a wheelchair user on an Amtrak train to the management of Amtrak. I was equally pleased to see the reinstatement of

the rail workers. However, there are a couple of things that it would be good for the editorial staff to keep in mind.

The disability rights movement has fought against the labeling of people by their disabilities or the fact that they are disabled. The overwhelming numbers of the persons with disabilities are working-class toilers who have been frozen out of the labor market except to be used as a contingent of the reserve army of unemployed and underemployed.

Injured workers are cast aside with the woefully inadequate workers compensation system. A large number of persons with disabilities are veterans who were used as cannon fodder in imperialist wars. An even larger number of people with disabilities are the victims of imperialism in the underdeveloped world where, in addition to being bombed and shot, preventable diseases and hunger cause blindness, paralysis, developmental disabilities and less "visible" disabilities like heart disease, lung diseases, and HIV-AIDS, particularly among children.

Children with disabilities are de-

prived of not only an equal education and are labeled and segregated, but are the target of the ruling class offensive against the social wage. People with disabilities have found that the oft touted Americans with Disabilities Act is a very hollow promise of equal rights and, even then, under attack because its implementation would cut into the profits of the ruling rich.

The "leadership" of the disabilities rights movement's major organizations are captives of the Democratic and Republican parties, and therefore unable to explain why there has been no real progress for the vast majority of people with disabilities. In spite of advances in raising the consciousness of the non-disabled to the reality that people with disabilities can and do live lives of purpose and accomplishment (including leadership of the vanguard party of the toilers in this country), the labeling of people by their disabilities persists.

One of the unfinished tasks that will have to be tackled by the workers and farmers when they come to power will be the full integration of

people with disabilities into all of the social activity of human kind.

Wheelchair users are not "wheelchair bound" any more than non-wheelchair users are "foot bound." Ray Charles is a musician and composer who is blind, not a blind composer. I'm sure you get the point.  
Robin Maisel  
Glendale, California

### Best newspaper I've seen

I received a couple of sample copies of your newspaper. Thank you very much. The socialist newspaper has a lot of information concerning things going on in the world. It's one of the best newspapers I've seen in a long time. Here is a small donation.  
A prisoner  
Beaumont, Texas

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Zimbabweans: 'No to food price hike'

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Food riots erupted in Zimbabwe January 19 — 21. Protests and clashes spread rapidly from the capital, Harare, to cities and towns in the central, southern, and eastern parts of the country. The *Zimbabwe Independent* reported that at least eight people were killed. Police and army units arrested 2,300 people. Many stores were emptied and burned.

The riots, together with a general strike in December, present the government of President Robert Mugabe with one of its most serious challenges since coming to power in 1980. In that year a growing nationalist insurgency brought down the racist regime in what was then Rhodesia and won independence from Britain.

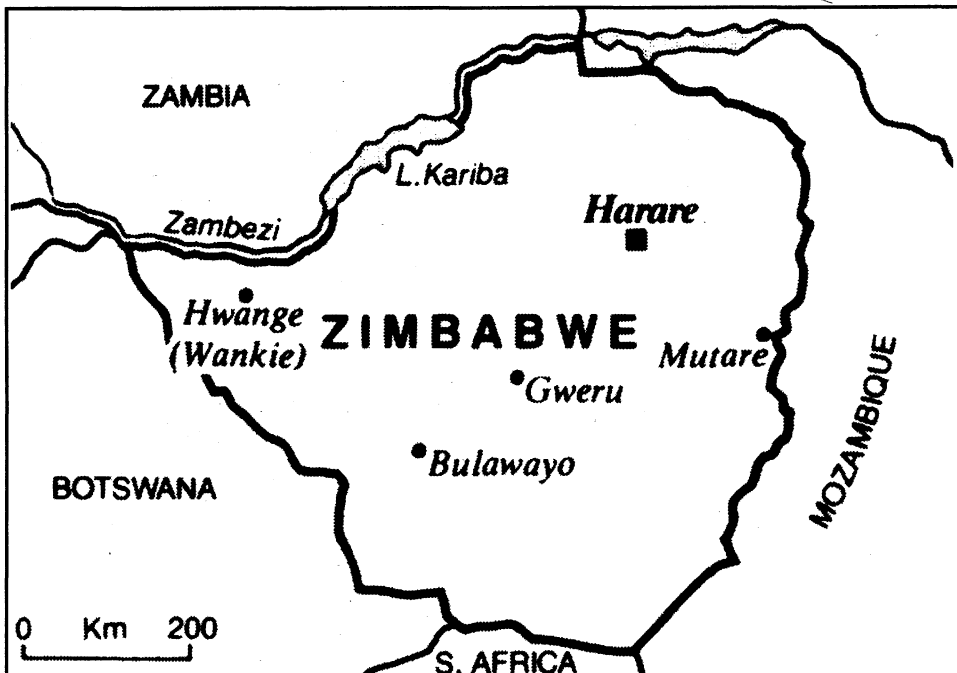
The spontaneous protests, which began in the sprawling working-class districts south of Harare, were sparked by a 21 percent rise in the price of maize meal on January 19. The price of this staple food had already soared 36 percent in October, and another 24 percent in December. The costs of bread, flour, sugar, margarine, cooking oil, soap, and other staples have risen 30–40 percent in recent months.

These price rises, in turn, are an immediate result of the hammer blows dealt the Zimbabwean dollar in the wake of the currency turmoil that accelerated out of Asia last October. Since then the currency has lost about half its value. Today it takes about Z\$20 to buy US\$1.

Social conditions in Zimbabwe mirror those in much of sub-Saharan Africa. Despite a limited land reform earlier in Mugabe's tenure, about 4,500 white farmers own 70 percent of the country's best farmland. Unemployment in the landlocked nation is estimated as high as 50 percent. Interest rates are running at more than 30 percent. Forecasts for the country's chief exports — gold, base minerals, and tobacco — predict declining revenues.

The riots began January 19 when police teargassed and baton charged 1,000 demonstrators in central Harare. Running battles with the police erupted, and widespread break-ins began at stores in the city and townships.

The government rapidly ordered the army into the streets — with orders to shoot "looters" — when police proved inadequate to put down the revolt. Mugabe threatened to declare a state of emergency. Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa warned that army troops "will not hesitate to shoot any troublemakers who are encouraging looting and destruction of property." The deployment of the army against protesters is unprecedented in post-independence Zimbabwe.



Map shows Zimbabwe and surrounding southern African countries

The army initiated house-to-house searches in Chitungwiza, Harare's largest township. More than 300 people were arrested there on January 21 alone. Meanwhile, air force helicopters bombarded the township with tear gas.

Working-class anger over the conduct of the police and army was swift, fueling the clashes. Youths fought running battles with the police in the streets. "They have no right to shoot people just because they are exercising their democratic rights," said one Harare street vendor.

As riots spread, Mugabe ordered maize milling companies to reverse the price increase. Commerce Minister Nathan Shamuyarira announced that the Grain Marketing Board "had been informed not to raise its prices for maize to millers." The milling companies claimed that they were simply raising their prices to pass on cost increases dictated by the government-run marketing board.

Some Zimbabwean officials blamed the conditions that led to the food riots on structural adjustment programs the government

has adopted from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Alternately, government spokespeople claimed that "some white industrialists and farmers" had actually funded the riots. Business and non-state-owned media, meanwhile, castigated the Mugabe government for supposed mismanagement and planned land reforms, and bemoaned the return of "price controls." The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions denied responsibility for planning the actions.

Popular discontent also spilled onto the streets December 9, when a general strike called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) shut down factories and commerce nationwide. It was the biggest strike since independence.

The trade union body called the action to protest a recent tax increase, which Mugabe said would go to pay for a Z\$3 billion pension package to 50,000 veterans of the independence war. The government repealed the tax on the day of the strike.

The strike action drew solid national support. "It is the general discontent that is erupting," said ZCTU secretary-general Morgan Tsvangirai. Protests were peaceful except in Harare, where police sprayed workers with tear gas and carried out widespread beatings. As protesters retreated from the city center, groups of youths pelted the cops with stones and set up barricades. Mugabe was at the time delivering his "state of the nation" address to parliament, making no mention of the strike.

Two days later, eight thugs barged into the office of the ZCTU secretary-general and beat him up.

## Hydro-Quebec uses ice storm to bypass safety

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — The crisis provoked by the ice storm that hit Quebec in early January continues. As of January 25 there were still more than 110,000 homes without electricity. At least 22 deaths have been attributed to the consequences of the massive loss of electrical power, which at one point affected 3 million people.

Claiming the crisis demanded urgent measures, the Quebec Provincial Government, headed by Premier Lucien Bouchard, passed laws allowing Hydro-Quebec practically unheard-of powers to develop its electrical lines. Existing laws on the environment and the control of agricultural land are shelved by the new decrees, which were adopted in Cabinet and never discussed in Quebec's National Assembly.

Following a meeting with Hydro-Quebec president Andre Caille, Laurent Pellerin,

president of the Agricultural Producers Union, said, "It is no longer a question of a process of public meetings through the Office of Public Audiences on the Environment [BAPE] and the Agricultural Land Protection Commission [CPTA]." The BAPE had earlier refused Hydro-Quebec permission to run an aerial line between power stations in Duvernay and Anjou, demanding that the line be run underground instead, which is safer but more costly and time consuming to set up. Now Hydro-Quebec will be allowed build the aerial line.

In the 1960s ruling rich in Quebec decided to heavily develop and promote the use of hydroelectric power as a major source of revenue. In 1962 almost all remaining private hydroelectric companies were nationalized and a massive program of development of hydroelectric dams was launched. By 1996 electricity accounted for 41 percent of all of Quebec's energy consumption, compared with an average of 23.8 percent for all provinces in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. Almost 80 percent of all residences in Quebec use electric heat.

For more than three decades the reliability of the aerial power lines that carry most of this electricity has been an issue. Hydro-Quebec's network is dependent on above ground pylons and wooden polls. This is what made it so vulnerable to ice buildup on the lines and polls and from falling branches.

The January 14 issue of *La Presse*, a major French-language daily in Montreal, referred to an editorial they published after a previous ice storm in 1961 which advocated the burying of cables. That editorial asked, "Shouldn't the burying of the lines be one of the first items in a unemployment works program since so many workers are looking for work right now?"

At the Montreal Militant Labor Forum January 16, David Johnston, a Hydro-Quebec worker who came to Quebec to help out in the wake of the storm, explained that burying the electrical lines would be much safer. In his opinion the issue is not cost but the health and welfare of working people.

Following the storm, the Quebec government called on the Canadian army to help in "maintaining order," clearing away bro-

ken branches, and other tasks. More than 9,000 soldiers have been deployed in Quebec. At the provincial government's request, soldiers were given the power of police agents. *La Presse* reported January 15 that 3,000 soldiers in the Montérégie, the region hardest hit by the crisis, were going door to door, with the power to remove people from their homes by force.

The federal government has seized upon the opportunity to use troops in the streets of Quebec in its efforts to refurbish the image of the Canadian army. The *Toronto Star* on January 14 quoted Capt. Mario Couture, a spokesperson of the army's Quebec headquarters, saying "It's a good change from all the problems we had and the bad publicity." Couture was referring to the murders of several civilians committed by the Canadian army in Somalia in 1993.

The aid offered by the different levels of government is inadequate. The Quebec government has offered Can\$70 (US\$48) a week per person in the hardest hit areas, with a number of restrictions on receiving even this sum. The federal government has made available Can\$50 million to Quebec. The government has also set up a repair and reconstruction program that it says will temporarily employ between 8,000 — 10,000 jobless workers in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick.

The Federal Minister of Agriculture, Lyle Vanclief has refused to give clear answers on how farmers will be aided. In the region of Saint-Hyacinthe alone, some 5,500 of 6,500 farmers have been without electricity. There have been major losses of livestock and fruit and maple trees.

At the Militant Labor Forum January 16, Annette Kouri, a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the Communist League, said the unions should fight for "full compensation for all those who have been affected by the crisis. We need to demand a massive public works program at union wages to repair the damage and bury the electrical lines. And we need to call for the return of the army to the barracks."

Joe Young is a member of USWA Local 7625.

## Former apartheid top faces charges

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — P.W. Botha, president and top racist of apartheid South Africa in the 1980s, appeared in court January 23 on charges of ignoring a subpoena to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission ordered Botha to testify on his role in the crimes of the apartheid system, under which the large black majority was denied the most basic civil and human rights, but he refused to appear in December.

Judge Victor Lagaju, who is black, presided over the brief hearing in the southern Cape city of George, and postponed the case to February 23. If Botha enters a plea of not guilty for ignoring the subpoena, the case will go to trial April 14.

Botha was flanked by senior generals of the old apartheid state, including former defense minister Magnus Malan, Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen, and former Defense Force chief Jannie Geldenhuys.

At a post-hearing press conference, Botha denounced the commission's "attempts to humiliate me and my people." Botha swore he would "stand by my principles," and urged "all those opposed to the forces of chaos, communism, and socialism" to do the same.

"I stand with all those who executed lawful commands from my government in our struggle against the revolutionary communist onslaught against our country. I deplore the vilification of brave soldiers and policemen," he said. "South Africa is on a dangerous road, and President [Nelson] Mandela must not waken the tiger in the Afrikaner nation." Afrikaners are the descendants of Dutch settlers in South Africa.

These words did not deter the 1,000-strong protest called by the African National Congress on the other side of the barbed wire. Energetic demonstrators loudly denounced Botha throughout the course of the day.

— T.J.F.